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The History of REYNARD *the Fox.*

TRANSLATED BY

WILLIAM CAXTON.

1481.

Edited by Edward Arber, F.S.A.

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Edited by EDWARD ARBER,
HON. FELLOW OF KING'S COLLEGE, LONDON; F.S.A.
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH LITERATURE, ETC.,
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, LONDON.

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The history of reynart the foxe 1

The Table 1–3
The Prologue of the Author... 4

The Action of this History. 5–120

∴ Events anterior to the Action, together with the parables, tales, and other principal speeches, are set in Italic type.

[PART I.]

[Sect. i.] NOBLE, the King of all beasts, summons all animals to his open Court at Whitsuntide, at Stade 5
ISEGRIM complains of REYNARD's trespasses to his children and with his wife 5
COURTOIS complains that REYNARD stole his pudding 6
TIBERT defends REYNARD, and says that the pudding was his 6
The Panther relates how narrowly KYWART had been murdered by REYNARD 6
GRIMBERT defends REYNARD. *ISEGRIM had often misdealed* [unfairly shared] *with REYNARD, as in the plaice, and also of the fat flitch of bacon. That trespass with ERSWYND was seven years before her marriage. She was soon healed thereof. She complaineth not! If KYWART had not learned aright his lesson, should not REYNARD his master beat him therefore? COURTOIS had stolen the pudding, who shall blame REYNARD if he has taken stolen goods from a thief? REYNARD is now a recluse, and would fain be with GOD* ... 7
CHANTICLEER complains for the murder of his daughter COPPEN, whose head REYNARD has bitten off 9
KING NOBLE retorts on GRIMBERT 11
They bury COPPEN with full honours, and erect a marble tombstone to her memory 11
The King and his Council determine that REYNARD shall be sent for 11

[Sect. ii.] BRUIN carries the summons to REYNARD at *Mal y perdu* 11
He is however beguiled by the Fox, and at last caught in a half-cloven tree in the yard of LANTFERT, "a strong carpenter of great timber" living in a neighbouring village to REYNARD's castle 13
All the parish attack the bear; who, after many blows, escapes, nearly dead, down the river, with the loss of his scalp, ears, and forepaws 15
With great agony, he returns wenteling [*rolling over and over again*] to the Court 18

[Sect. iii.] The King and his Council determine to send a Second messenger 19
TIBERT is sent with the second message 19
Has an evil augury from "St. Martin's birds"... 19
TIBERT is also beguiled by REYNARD, is caught at night in a gin in the house of the priest of LANTFERT's village, is sore beaten, and has one of his eyes struck out by MARTINET the priest's son 20
He also returns wenteling to Court, by sunrise 23

[Sect. iv.] GRIMBERT volunteers to summon his uncle REYNARD 23
And is well received by him at *Mal y perdu* 24
REYNARD's family life 24
On their way to the Court, REYNARD shrives himself to GRIMBERT 25
He confesses *that he has trespassed against all the beasts, especially against BRUIN, TIBERT and CHANTICLEER. He has slandered the King and the Queen. He beguiled ISEGRIM* (1) *calling him* Eme [friend] *though he was nothing of his kin; and at Elmare, where he made him a monk when he himself became one, where* (2) *by his causing ISEGRIM's feet to be tied to the bellrope, he was almost beaten to death;* (3) *by teaching him to catch fish.*

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whereby ISEGRIM received many a stroke, and (4) *in the larder of the richest priest of Vermedoos, through which he was so stoned as to be thrown into a ditch outside the village as dead,* (5) *and afterwards in a hen house, where he was almost smitten to death,*
"*I have brought him thus in many a jeopardy, more than I can now reckon. I should find many more, if I bethought myself well, which I shall tell you hereafter. Also I have trespassed with his wife*" 25
GRIMBERT imposes a trifling penance, which REYNARD *promises* to observe [but nothing more is heard of it.] 28
Nevertheless journeying by a Cloister of Black Nuns, REYNARD snatches at a fat young capon, for which GRYMBERT rebuking him, he offers *to say a* paternoster *for the souls of all poultry and geese he had betrayed and stolen from those holy nuns.* Nevertheless the Fox has ever his eye towards the poultry... 29

[Sect. iii.] Though sorely quaking, REYNARD comes to the Court with a bold face 29
He vainly excuses himself to the King 30
He is arrested and judged to be hanged by the neck 31
TIBERT, ISEGRIM and BRUIN prepare to hang him 31
REYNARD asks that he may make his dying confession openly 34
All that stood there had pity on him, and said it was but a little request. The King assents... 31
REYNARD then confesses, with a large circumstantiality, *How he, playing among the lambs, first tasted blood. How ISEGRIM and he made an alliance, but the Wolf ever had the greatest share of the plunder. Yet he did not care, for he had more gold and silver than seven waggons could carry. These riches had been stolen, and if they had not been stolen, it would have cost the King his life*... 35
The false tale of the FOX, *of the fictitious treason of his own father, his nephew GRIMBERT, ISEGRIM and TIBERT to make BRUIN the King* 36
How his father found King EMERICK'S treasure, and hid it 36
How the five conspirators met between the Ghent and the thorpe called Yfte 37
How that GRIMBERT, drunk with wine, told the plot to his wife SLOEPCADE; who told it to ERMELIN, who told it to REYNARD 37
How he watched his father to find where the treasure was... 38
How he found and stole it 39
How when his father discovered the theft, he went and hanged himself: and so the conspiracy for want of that money, was broken 39
The Queen hoping to win this treasure moves the king to forgive REYNARD his misdeeds: who tells them that *it is in Kreken pit in a wood named Hulsterlo in the wilderness on the West side of Flanders* 41
KYWART being questioned, knows of that place [but REYNARD asks nothing of him about the treasure.] 42
REYNARD would go there with the King, but *the Archdeacon having put him in the Pope's curse for having persuaded ISEGRIM to run out of religion*, he must go on a pilgrimage to Rome 43

[Sect. vi.] The King proclaims REYNARD's pardon 44
Who secures the arrest of BRUIN and ISEGRIM 44
And by the Queen's favour, obtains for his pilgrimage a square foot of BRUIN's skin "on his ridge" for a scrip, and two shoes torn off from both ISEGRIM and ERSWYND 45
The King compels BELLIN to bless REYNARD's mail and staff as "belongeth to a pilgrim" ... 46
The King with his whole Court start REYNARD on his pilgrimage 48
Who then goes on his way, accompanied by KYWART and BELLIN as far as *Mal y perdu.*

[Sect. vii.] Arrived there, REYNARD leaves BELLIN outside and invites KYWART inside ... 48
Where he is slain by REYNARD, and is eaten by him and his family; all but his head 48
Narrating his successful beguilements to ERMELINE, they counsel that the Fox shall give over his pilgrimage, and stay at home 49
BELLIN, still outside and angry at KYWART's long delay, is beguiled by REYNARD: who sends him back to the Court with KYWART's head in the scrip and a letter as from himself which brings him, Dame OLEWRY, and all his family to death 51
The King, opening the scrip and reading the letter, discovers his deception; releases BRUIN and ISEGRIM, and for a reward gives BELLIN and all his lineage to them for a prey for ever 53
Then feasted the King twelve days longer for the love of the Bear and of the Wolf, so glad was he of the making of this peace [!]. 54

[PART II.]

[Sect. i.] At this great feast, came all manner of beasts. About noon on the eighth additional day LAPKEEL the Cony complains to him that REYNARD, standing before his Castle door like a pilgrim, tore off his ear and made four great holes in his head 54
CORBANT the Rook complains that REYNARD bit off the head of SHAKPBECK his wife, and then eat her so hungrily that he left only a few feathers 55
All the Court quake at the wrath of the King at these misdeeds 57

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The Queen says, "Hear the other side!" 57
FIRAPEEL advises that if REYNARD come not before the end of the feast, then let him be sore punished according to his trespasses 57
The King will send no special messenger to the Fox 58

[Sect. ii.] GRIMBERT in great sorrow and anger, runs the highway towards *Mal y perdu.* He spares neither bush nor haw, but he hastens so sorely that he did sweat 59
He finds REYNARD standing, with two young pigeons: who receives his news with a cool assurance, "Puff," dear nephew, "is there nothing else?" 60
They go in to the burgh and all the family sup on the pigeons, "as far as it would stretch" ... 60
They go to sleep, except the Fox who was all heavy, and lay and signed and sorrowed how he might best excuse himself 61
On the morrow early he rooms [*left*] the castle and goes towards the Court 61
On the way, he asks GRIMBERT to shrive him a second time. He confesses *to all the matters which previously in the History have been laid to his charge. And also to the great deceit he practised on ISEGRIM as to the red mare that had the price of her foal written on her foot, which was new shod with iron and six strong nails* 61
REYNARD's view of human life 64

[Sect. iii.] With such manner of talking they come walking into the Court 65
REYNARD stoutly excuses himself to the King 66
The King replies, "I think well that ye shall this day for your works be hanged by your neck" 67
REYNARD replies, *Though I were condemned to death, yet ought ye to hear my words out.*
When GRIMBERT brought me first these tidings had I not been in the censures of the Church, I had without tarrying have come to the Court; but I went doling on the heath, and wist not what to do for sorrow. Then MARTIN the Ape, who has been Advocate to the Bishop of Camerik these nine years past, met with me 68
I told him [my own version] *of what LAPREEL and CORBANT had done, and their false complaints to the King* 69
The Ape said, "Go to the Court, and excuse yourself" 69
"Alas friend," said I, "that may not be. For the Archdeacon has put me in the Pope's curse" 69
"Nay, cousin," said he, "be not afraid. I understand this business. I will cite the Archdeacon, and bring you an absolution against his will. Go to Court, where you shall find RUKENAW my wife, her two sisters, my three children, and many more of our lineage, who will gladly do somewhat for their friends" 70
"And if you be so overcharged that you may have no right, send to me night and day to the Court of Rome; and let me have knowledge thereof; and [This was REYNARD's boldest lie] *all those that be in the land—is it King or Queen, Wife or Man—I shall bring them all in the Pope's curse. For the Cardinal of PURE GOLD has my niece for his concubine"* 70
My lord, the King! when I heard this, I laughed; and with great gladness came hither, and have told you all truth" 71
All the beasts, both poor and rich, were all still when the Fox spoke so stoutly 71
LAPREEL and CORBANT escape from the Court, saying, "GOD grant that this fell murderer may fare evil! He can bewrap and cover his falsehood that his words seem as true as gospel. Hereof knoweth no man than we, how should we bring witnesses? It is better we wyke [*flee*] and depart than that we should hold a field and fight with him; he is so shrewd. Yea, though there were five of us, we could not defend ourselves; but would slay us all" 71
ISEGRYM and BRUIN were wood [*mad*] in themselves to see these two escape from the Court 71
The Fox offers for the King's sake, to pardon and forgive [!] LAPREEL and CORBANT ... 72

[Sect. iv.] The King then charges him with KYWART's death 72
Then is REYNARD sore afraid. He wists not what to say. He is at his wits' end, and looks about him piteously. But no man proffers him hand. The Fox stands in great dread and sighs so that all hear him; but the Wolf and the Bear are glad 72
It happens well for the Fox that Dame RUKENAW the She Ape was there 73
Her first speech on behalf of REYNARD 73
The King's rejoinder 74
Her second speech in favour of the Fox, in which occurs 74
The Parable of a Man that delivered a Serpent from peril of death 75
She summons all the friends and kin of the Fox to the number of forty [*what we should now call a political demonstration*] 79
FIRAPEEL says, "Sire, you may judge no further than your men give verdict"... 80
The King said, "This is all true. I shall hear the Fox. Can he excuse himself of that is laid against him?"... 80
REYNARD was glad at these words, and thought, *"GOD thank mine aunt! I have now a good foot to dance on, I shall now look out of mine eyes, and bring forth the fairest leasings that ever man heard, and bring myself out of this danger"* 80

[Sect. v.] The Foxe cries, *Alas! what say ye? Is KYWART dead? And where is BELLIN the Ram?* [Eaten, as he well knew, by BRUIN and ISEGRIM]. *What brought he to you when he came again? For I delivered unto him three jewels. One for the King, the other two for my Lady the Queen* 80

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The King says, "BELLIN brought us nought else but KYWART's head" 81
REYNARD's great [*pretended*] grief at the loss of his jewels... 81
Dame RUKENAW saith, "Dear nephew, what profiteth that ye make all this sorrow. Let it pass!" 81
"Nay Aunt! think not that! Never King ever gave such rich jewels as these be"... ... 81

REYNARD's description of the jewels—
A RING OF FINE GOLD. Within were written in sable and azure three Hebrew names which Master ABRION of Tyre told me were the three names which SETH brought out of Paradise when he brought to his father ADAM the Oil of Mercy. Whosoever beareth the names shall never be hurt by thunder or lightning, nor no witchcraft shall have power over him, nor shall he be tempted to do sin. He never shall take harm by cold though he lay three long winter nights in the field, though it snowed, stormed or froze never so sore. ... 81
Without the ring was a stone of three manner of colours.
the one part was RED, and the shining of the stone made as great a light at night as midday.
another part was WHITE and could cure any outward sickness, or if the stone was laid in the water, that water being drunk would cure any inward sickness.
and the last part was GREEN like glass, but there were some sprinkles therein like purple, that made the possessor of it beloved even by his enemies.
But he must be a noble gentleman and have no churl's conditions, and therefore I sent it to my dear Lord the King. I found this ring in my father's treasure [which he had stolen, *p.* 39] 82
A COMB MADE OF PANTHER's BONE, which is a beast that for his beauty and sweet smelling is followed of all other beasts... 83
On this comb is engraven the Judgment of PARIS 83
THE MIRROR OR GLASS IN AN EBONY FRAME AND HANDLE.
The same wood that King CROMPART made the wooden flying horse for the love of King MORDIGAGA's daughter.
On this mirror was engraved the Fables of (1) *the Horse that came into subjection by asking an Herdsman to ride on him to take an Hart*... 85
(2) *The Ass that kissed his Master like a dog* 86
[*Hearken farther how my father and TIBERT went together*] 87
(3) *The Wolf and the Stork* 88
All this and much more than I can now well remember was made and wrought on this glass 89

[Sect. vi.] "*Dear Lord! remember not ye when my Lord your father lived and ye a youngling of two years* [!]"... 89
How REYNARD's father prescribed ISEGRIM's liver to make the King's father whole; and when ISEGRIM objected he was not five years old: he said, "What skilleth these words? Let him be opened, and I shall know by the liver if it be good for you or not!" 90
How I treated you better than ISEGRIM when we met you and the Queen 91
The King says, "REYNARD! ye say reasonably. I know not of KYWART's death more than the BELLIN the Ram [*now dead*] brought his head hither in the mail. Therefore I let you go quit. For I have no witness hereof"... 93
They all sorrow with the Fox for the loss of his jewels 93

[Sect. vii.] Now hath the Fox his matter fast and fair. He hath made so many leasings that he may go freely whither he will without complaining of any of them all; save of ISEGRIM 94
ISEGRIM complains on REYNARD for the rape of his wife ERSWYND 94
Which REYNARD denies 94
ERSWYND tells of the trick REYNARD served her at the well 96
"Aunt," said the Fox, "though the strokes did you harm, I had rather you had them than I" 97
At ISEGRIM's request, REYNARD tells *The Story of these two and the She Ape* 97

[Sect. viii.] ISEGRIM challenges REYNARD, who takes up his glove. The King fixes a day and field 101
Dame RUKENAW's advice to REYNARD 102
The Combatants meet and fight 104
After much skirmishing, the Fox is undermost 108
But flattering ISEGRIM, he gets his paw out of his mouth, and by an unfair stratagem wins the fight 111
How the Fox has the worship 112
He tells the King *The parable of the Dog with the scalded haunches* 113
The King makes REYNARD of his Council and one of his Justices 115
The Fox with his friends and lineage depart from NOBLE the King, and arrive at *Malyperdu* 116

The Author's Reflections 117
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THE PERSONAGES, &c., OF THIS HISTORY.

HERR ERNST MARTIN's edition of *REINAERT—WILLEMS Gedicht van den vos REINAERDE.* Paderborn, 1874. 8vo.—besides a fuller, though corresponding text, in *verse*, contains an excellent glossary, the mere perusal of which shows clearly how much nearer the Low German is related to the English than to the present German. For many of the words may be rightly guessed at offhand by an ordinary Englishman to whom the German equivalents would be quite unintelligible. The Text reprinted by Herr MARTIN we will, for our present purpose, designate as WILLEM's Text.

Then we have the Low German *prose* version, the printing of which GERARD LEEU finished at Gouda in Holland on the 17th of August 1479. We shall here call this LEEU's Text. It is possibly a rude prose account of WILLEM's Text.

There is then CAXTON's Text; which, for all that he says in the Epilogue, is not a precise translation, but has, in places, omissions from and abridgments of the "Dutch" or Low German copy.

By the help of Herr MARTIN's glossary we are able to give the names —generic and personal—of most of the Animals in this story.—

Animals who speak or act.

	WILLEM.	*LEEU.*	*CAXTON.*	*PAGE.*
The Lion, King of all beasts	NOBEL	NOBEL	NOBLE	*passim*
The Lioness, the Queen.		[*No personal name*]		57
The Leopard.	FIRAPEEL	FIRAPEEL	FIRAPEEL	57
The Panther.		[*No personal name.*]		5, 30
The Bear.	BRUUN	BRUNINCK	BROWNYNG	12
		BRUUN / BRUYN	BRUIN	*passim*
The Wolf.	ISENGRIJN	YSEGRIM	ISEGRIM	*passim*
his wife.	EERSWIJN *or* HAERSINT	EERSWIJN	ERSWYND	*passim*
The Fox.	REINAERT	REYNAERT	REYNARD	*passim*
his wife.	ERMELINE *or* HERMELINE	ARMELINE	ERMELINE	24
their eldest son.	REINAERDIJN	REYNAERDIJN	REYNARDYN	69
their second son.	ROSSEEL	ROESEL	ROSSEL	25
their youngest son.	REINAERDINE	REYNKEN	REINIKIN	25
The Badger.	GRIMBEERT	GRYMBERT	GRIMBERT	*passim*
his wife.	SLUPECADE	SLOPECADE	SLOPECADE	37, 112

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	WILLEM.	LEEU.	CAXTON.	PAGE
The Cat.	TIBEERT	TYBERT	TIBERT	*passim* in Part I. & 87
The Hare.	CUWAERT	KYWAERT	KYWERT	7, 42
The Cony [Rabbit].	LAMPREEL	LAMPREEL	LAMPREEL	55
The Ram.	BELIJN	BELLIJN	BELLIN	30, 48–53
his wife.	HAWI	OLEWY	OLEWEY	30, 53
The Hound.	CORTOIS	CORTOIS	COURTOIS	6
The Cock.	CANTICLEER	CANTENKLEER	CHANTECLEER	9
his daughter.	COPPE	COPPEN	COPPEN	9
his other daughter.	CANTAERT	CANTART	CANTART	9
his third daughter.	CRAEIANT	CRAEYANT	CRAYANT	9
The Raven.	TIECELIJN	TYSELIJN	TYSELYN	44
The Ape.	MERTIJN	MARTIJN	MARTIN	68
The She Ape.	RUKENAU	RUKENAW	RUKENAW	73–112
their elder daughter.	BITELUUS	BITELUYS	BYTELUYS	79, 112
their son.	VUULROMP	VULROMP	FULROMPE	79, 112
their younger daughter.	HATENET	HATENETTE	HATENETTE	79, 112
The Rook.	CORBOUT	CORBANT	CORBANT	55
his wife.	SCHERPENEBBE	SCHERPENEBBE	SHARPBECK	55
The Camel	[*No personal name.*]			31
The Goose	BRUNEEL	BRUNEEL	BRUNEL	31
The Ass	BOUDEWIJN	BOUDEWIJN	BOUDEWYN	31
The Bull	BORREEL	BORRE	BORRE	31
The Cow	[*omitted*]	HARMEL	HAMEL	31

Animals who are mentioned (often without any personal name) but who neither speak nor act.

The Squirrel.	Eenkoorn	eechorn	squyrel	79
The (?) Weasel.	Muushont	muushont	musehout	31, 79
The (?) Pole Cat.	Fluwijn	fluwijn	fychews	79, 112
The Marten.	Maerter	marter	martron	79, 112
The Beaver.	Bever	Beuer	Beuer	79, 112
with his wife.	OORDEGALE	ORDEGALE	ORDEGALE	79, 112
The Genet Cat.	Ghenet	genette	genete	79
The (?)	Oostrale	ostrole	ostrole	79, 119
The (?) Pole Cat.	Bunsinc	Boussinc	boussyng	79
The Ferret.	Foret	foret	fyret	79, 112
The Otter.	Otter	Otter	oter	79, 104, 112
with his wife.	PANTHECROTE	PANTECROET	PANTECROET	79, 112

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	WILLEM.	*LEEU.*	*CAXTON.*	*PAGE*
A She Ape. Dame.	AELCROTTE	ATROTE	ATROTE	79
[*her sister.*	QUANTESKIEVE	quante en sleiue	*omitted*]	79
The Weasel.	Wesel	wesel	wesel	79
The Ermine.	Hermel	hermel	hermel	79
The Hedgehog.	Eghel	egel	*translated as* the asse	79
The Flitter Mouse.	vledermuus	vledermuijs	*translated as* the backe	79, 112
The Water Rat.	Waterrat	water rotte	watreratte	79
[*The Bittern.*	Watermael	water hoen	*omitted*]	79

Subordinate human characters.

The King's clerk. [? man or animal]	BOTSAERT	BOEKERT	BOK[W]ART	52
The following peasants, &c., inhabiting a village near the Fox's Castle.				
The strong Carpenter.	LAMFROIT	LANTFERT	LANTFERT	14, 15, 16
The Priest.	[*No personal name.*]			15, 16
his wife.	JULOCKE	JULOK	JULOK	15
their son.	MARTINET	MARTINET	MARTINET	22
with the crooked leg.	HUGHELIJN	HUGELIJN	HUGHELYN	16
with the broad long nose.	LUDOLF	LUDOLF	LUDOLF	16
the long.	LOTTRAM	OTTRAM	OTTRAM	16
with the long fingers.	BERTOUT	BERTOLL	BERTOLT	16
	ABEL QUAC	ABELQUAC	ABELQUAK	16
Dame.	BAVE	BAVE	BAUE	16

On the *minutiæ* of criticism, as to original Low German spelling &c., CAXTON's text is of little value. His own English will however be better understood by references to the language from which he translated ; but it is nevertheless, for the most part, strongly idiomatic. WILLEM's has the best spelling of names, &c., in the three Texts. Meanwhile for the present impression, this comparison will suffice to foreacquaint the readers with the principal Actors in this History.

The names of the places are after the Low German forms ending in *-loo*, *-ing*, and so forth : but all precision as to locality in Flanders is most carefully avoided ; though places beyond, as Montpelier, Akon [*Aachen* or *Aix-la-Chapelle*], are introduced to give local effect.

CAXTON is responsible for making ISEGRIM going to Oxford &c., *p.* 62, which is a fair instance of his adapted translation of the whole book.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY.

A. *General critical Study.*

The Literature of the Reynardine History, already very large, is ever growing. One cannot better begin the study of it than with Mr. THOM's *Introductory Sketch of the Literary History of the Romance* prefixed to No. 4, below, and with the many works of which he there gives the titles. Since that was written, the study has gone on, fresh manuscripts have been discovered, and the following works, which may be consulted with advantage, issued.

1863. Groningen. 8vo. M. W. J. A. JONCKBLOET. *Etude sur le Roman de RENART.*

1872. Basle. 8vo. Herr ERNST MARTIN. *Examen Critique des Manuscrits du Roman de RENART.* A masterly *brochure*, which describes the principal known MSS. in Europe.

1874. Paderborn. 8vo. Herr ERNST MARTIN has also published *REINAERT. WILLEMS Gedicht van den vos Reinaerde*, und die umarbeitung und forsetzung *REINAERT's* Historie.

Subsequent to its original composition in Flanders in the 12th century, this History was (like the Arthurian Romances) taken in hand by other writers of different nations, and expanded in various directions: so that the entire Cycle of the Romance now comprises some 41,000 verses containing 39 Branches or Stories, the titles of which Herr MARTIN gives in his *Examen*. We may hope from that patient and accomplished Scholar a complete edition of the whole Cycle.

B. *Editions of the unexpanded Story.*

ISSUES IN TRANSLATOR'S LIFETIME.

1. 17 Aug. 1479. Gouda 4to. Hystorie van Regnaert die vos. [COLOPHON] Hier eyndet die hystorie van reynaert die vos, ende is gheprent ter goude in hollant by mi gheraert leeu den seuentienden dach in augusto Int iaer M.CCCC. en LXXIX.
   Of earlier date than any other *printed REYNARD* in any language whatsoever. The copy in the Greville Collection is thought to be the only one in existence.
2. June 1481. Westminster 4to. The printing of CAXTON's translation finished, See *p.* 120. Very rare.
3. [1489. Westminster 4to.] A second Edition printed by CAXTON. Without printer's name, or place, or date. The only known copy is in the Pepysian Library, Cambridge. See Catalogue of *Caxton Celebration*, 1877, *p.* 21. No. 156.

∴ The popularity of the Work accounts for the rarity of these copies. These early editions were thumbed out of existence.

ISSUES SINCE HIS DEATH.

Many other Versions, of course, exist in English: but we here confine ourselves to reprints of CAXTON's Translation,

4. 1844. London 8vo. *Percy Society. The History of Reynard the Fox.* Ed. by W. J. THOMS, F.S.A., with the excellent *Introductory Sketch* above referred to.
5. 15 Aug, 1878. Southgate, London, N. The present impression.

∴ The comparative study of *REYNARD* and the cognate Romances of its time would prove a fascinating inquiry for any active intelligence now idle. Englishmen sadly need vivid conceptions of foreign life and manners from 900 to 1200 A.D.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE story of *Reinecke Fuchs*, or to give it the original Low German name, *Reineke de Fos*, is, more than any other, a truly European performance: for some centuries, a universal household possession and secular Bible, read every where, in the palace and the hut; it still interests us, moreover, by its intrinsic worth, being on the whole the most poetical and meritorious production of our Western World in that kind; or perhaps of the whole World, though, in such matters, the West has generally yielded to, and learned from the East. THOMAS CARLYLE. *German Lit. &c.* Foreign Quarterly Rev. No. XVI. *p.* 381. *Ed.* 1831.

. . . So much for the outward fortunes of this remarkable Book. It comes before us with a character such as can belong only to a very few; that of being a true world's-Book, which through centuries was every where at home, the spirit of which diffused itself into all languages and all minds. The quaint Æsopic figures have painted themselves in innumerable heads; that rough deep-lying humour has been the laughter of many generations. So that, at worst, we must regard this *Reinecke* as an ancient Idol, once worshipped, and still interesting for that circumstance, were the sculpture never so rude. We can love it, moreover, as being indigenous, wholly of our own creation: it sprang up from European sense and character, and was a faithful type and organ of these.

But independently of all extrinsic considerations, the fable of *Reinecke* may challenge a judgement on its own merits. Cunningly constructed, and not without a true poetic life, we must admit it to be: great power of conception and invention, great pictorial fidelity, a warm, sunny tone of colouring, are manifest enough. It is full of broad, rustic mirth; inexhaustible in comic devices; a World-Saturnalia, where Wolves tonsured into Monks, and nigh starved by short commons, Foxes pilgriming to Rome for absolution, Cocks pleading at the judgment-bar, make strange mummery. Nor is this wild Parody of Human Life without its meaning and moral: it is an Air-pageant from Fancy's Dream-grotto, yet Wisdom lurks in it; as we gaze the vision becomes poetic and prophetic. A true Irony must have dwelt in the Poet's heart and head: here, under grotesque shadows, he gives the saddest picture of Reality; yet for us without sadness; his figures mask themselves in uncouth, bestial vizards, and enact, gambolling; their Tragedy dissolves into sardonic grins. He has a deep, heartfelt Humour sporting with the world and its evils in kind mockery; this is the poetic *soul*, round which the outward *matériel* has fashioned itself into living coherence. And so, in that rude old Apologue, we have still a mirror, though now tarnished and time-worn, of true magic reality: and can discern there, in cunning reflex, some image both of our destiny and of our duty; for now, as then, "Prudence is the only virtue sure of its reward," and Cunning triumphs where Honesty is worsted; and now, as then, it is the wise man's part to know this, and cheerfully look for it, and cheerfully defy it:

Ut vulpis adulatio
Here thro' his own world moveth,
Sic hominis et ratio
Most like to REYNARD proveth.

If *Reinecke* is nowise a perfect Comic Epos, it has various features of such, and, above all, a genuine Epic spirit, which is the rarest feature.—*Idem. p*, 385.

. . . . . Nevertheless, the old Low-German original has also a certain charm, and simply as the original would claim some notice. It was reckoned greatly the best performance that was ever brought out in that Dialect; interesting, moreover, in a philological point of view, especially to us English; being properly the language of our old Saxon Fatherland; and still curiously like our own, though the two, for some twelve centuries, have had no brotherly communication.—*Idem. p.* 388.

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HE scene of the Low German Version of this History from which CAXTON made his translation is laid in the midst of Flanders, "between the Elbe and the Somme," *p.* 39. The Lion's feast is held at Stade at Whitsuntide; and the whole action is comprised in that one feast; which however was extended for twelve days longer on account of the King's temporary love for the Bear and the Wolf. *p.* 54.

The Action consists of Two Parts, containing Three Occurrences.

The first Occurrence is the Summons, *pp.* 11–24, Shriving, *pp.* 25–28, Trial, *pp.* 29–40, and Acquittal, *pp.* 41–44, of REYNARD for injuries offered to ISEGRIM, *p.* 5; robbery from COURTOIS, *p.* 6; the attempted murder of KYWART, *p.* 7; and the successful murder of COPPEN, *p.* 9.

The Second Occurrence is on pretty much the same ground, though with fresh incidents. It is the Warning (by GRIMBERT), *p.* 58, Shriving, *pp.* 60–66, Trial, *pp.* 66–92, and Acquittal, *pp.* 93–94, of REYNARD, for the murders of KYWART, *p.* 49, and of SHARPBECK, *p.* 55, and the assault on LAPREEL, *p.* 54.

The Third Occurrence is the Complaint of ISEGRIM against REYNARD, *pp.* 94–101, followed by his challenge, *p.* 101. Then comes the spirited Fight between them, so graphically told at *pp.* 102–112, in which REYNARD by dishonest craft wins the day, *p.* 112, "has the worship," and is finally exonerated from all his crimes.

So that the Story is the History of the Three fraudulent Escapes of the Fox from punishment, the Record of the Defeat of Justice by flattering lips and dishonourable acts.

The lying is so witty, cunning, and clever, that we do well perpetually to remember the evil deeds of which it is the cloak. Ravin and violence are in all REYNARD's *acts*; whatever he may say.

The Second Part is not however wholly consistent with the First, as—

GRIMBERT is REYNARD's "susters sonne" at *p.* 7, his "brother sonne" at *p.* 58.

REYNARD's father hangs himself at *p.* 39, but Master REYNARD is the King's physician and crowned with flowers at *p.* 90.

TIBERT, a prominent actor in the First Half; disappears in the Second, except in REYNARD's story at *p.* 87.

REYNARD's rape on ERSWYND was before her marriage with ISEGRIM at *p.* 8, but after it at *p.* 94.

Malyperdu is in a wood at *p.* 12, but on a heath at *p.* 61.

The description of the marvellous virtue of the magic comb made of a Panther's bone at *p.* 83 is made in forgetfulness that a Panther is a speaker at *p.* 6. And so on.

In the First Part, too, the speeches are shorter, the action more rapid,

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and the expression purer. In the Second Part there is perhaps both more subtility, and more moral reflection in the talk.

All this points to the supposition that the Continuator of the Second Part was not the Author of the original Story.

II.

THE subtility of the book is marvellous. Take two instances. In the First Half, GRIMBERT, unwilling to see his uncle hanged, leaves or, as the Text has it "rooms" the Court. REYNARD takes unpremeditated advantage of his unexpected absence to colour his fiction of the pretended Conspiracy to make BRUIN the King, by the inclusion of his relative GRIMBERT among the plotters, which no one in his nephew's absence was able to controvert.

In the Second part, REYNARD, at his wits' end, sees RUKENAW, the She Ape at the Court; whereupon he also feigns the story of having met with her husband MARTIN the Ape, and of the instructions he had given through him to her to befriend him. The whole of his subsequent deliverances are owing to RUKENAW's advocacy and counsel: yet as REYNARD had never met MARTIN, she was as much deluded as any in the Court.

And so through not a few other instances, the action all turns on Credence in circumstantial but uncorroborated Assertions. The verisimilitude of the accounts given by REYNARD bewilders us until we check them by the facts of the antecedent story; and then we see that it is all only the affiance of simple Honesty in the wiles of Craft.

There are many touches of fine humour, keen observation, and strong satire in the work. The Author's Epilogue, at *p.* 119, is the offspring of an innocent mirthful wit. REYNARD's brains are necessary for his own efficient hanging at *p.* 32. The strong contrast between his real nature and home life very briefly sketched out at *pp.* 12, 17, 24, 25, 48, 49, 54, 58–60; and his character, appearances and speeches at Court, which occupy most of the book. The scathing satire on the prelates and rich curates at *p.* 64, with Bishop PRENDELOR [? *Taker of Gold*] and Sir RAPIAMUS his official, at *p.* 46, and the Cardinal of PURE GOLD and his concubine at *p.* 71.

The whole history is brimful of intention. Every personal name, every movement in it, has a meaning, and is worthy of our attention. In the framework of it, the murders and injuries are inflicted on the lesser animals, in order that the greater ones may speak and carry on the action.

There is a studied irrelevance mixed with a crafty conveyance in REYNARD's speeches. The slightest and most incidental allusion or illustration of one sentence (when he wishes it) becomes the main theme of the next, and so he wanders away on and on from his point to the

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bewildering of all his hearers. On the other hand, in all this irrelevancy, he contrives that his speeches, whether pertinent or irrelative, shall tend to the discredit of his enemies.

III.

LASTLY, we can but touch on the strong moral purpose of the work. Rightly to understand this we must remember that the King is endowed with irresistible might, from which there is no appeal whatever. REYNARD says, "I may not escape yow. we stonde all vnder your correccion. ye be mighty and stronge." *p.* 30. The Courtiers, or Barons, are all strong-fisted thieves, who "make unright go aboue right," *p.* 65. The Story is therefore that of the struggle between the power of Words and the power of Blows, a conflict between Mind and Matter. It was necessary for the physically weak to have Eloquence; the blame of REYNARD is in the frightful misuse he makes of it. The Author's spiritual purpose comes out

1. In the exposure of the Gospel of Lying according to REYNARD. The mere statement of such principles as these was their condemnation.

Who otherwise will now haunt and use the world than devise a leasing in the fairest wise, and that bewimple with kerchiefs about in such wise that men take for a truth, he is not run away from his master. This man may do wonders. He may wear scarlet, *&c.* *p.* 64.

Who can give to his leasing a conclusion and pronounce it without tattling, like as it were written before him, and that he can so blind the people that his leasing shall be better believed than the truth—*that* is the man. *p.* 65.

2. In his observations that—

There is in the world much seed left of the Fox, which now over all groweth and cometh sore up, though they have no red beards. Yet there be found more foxes than ever were heretofore. The righteous people be all lost. Truth and Righteousness be exiled and fordriven: and for them abide with us Covetousness, Falsehood, Hate, and Envy. These reign now much in every country. *p.* 117.

3. And in his final reflections—

And herewith will I leave. For what have I to write of these misdeeds. I have enough to do with mine own self: and so it were better that I held my peace and suffer. And the best that I can do is to amend myself now in this time. And so I counsel every man to do here in this present life, &c. *p.* 118.

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TRANSLATED AND PRINTED BY

WILLIAM CAXTON.

June 1481.

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This is the table of the historye of reynart the foxe

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Hyer begynneth th[e h]ystorye of reynard the fore

N this historye ben wreton the parables / goode lerynge / and dyuerse poyntes to be merkyd / by whiche poyntes men maye lerne to come to the subtyl knoweleche of suche thynges as dayly ben vsed and had in the counseyllys of lordes and prelates gostly and worldly / and / also emonge marchantes and other comone peple / And this booke is maad for nede and prouffyte of alle go[o]d folke / As fer as they in redynge or heeryng of it shal mowe vnderstande and fele the forsayd subtyl deceytes that dayly ben vsed in the worlde / not to th[e]entente that men shold vse them but that euery man shold eschewe and kepe hym from the subtyl false shrewis that they be not deceyuyd / Thenne who that wyll haue the very vnderstandyng of this mater / he muste ofte and many tymes rede in thys boke and ernestly and diligently marke wel that he redeth / ffor it is sette subtylly / lyke as ye shal see in redyng of it / and not ones to rede it ffor a man shal not wyth ones ouer redyng fynde the ryght vnderstandyng ne comprise it wel / but oftymes to rede it shal cause it wel to be vnderstande / And for them that vnderstandeth it / it shall be ryght Ioyous playsant and prouffitable

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How the lyon kynge of alle bestis sent out his mandementis that alle beestis sholde come to his feest and court capitulo primo

IT was aboute the tyme of penthecoste or whytsontyde / that the wodes comynly be lusty and gladsom / And the trees clad with leuys and blossoms and the ground with herbes and flowris swete smellyng and also the fowles and byrdes syngen melodyously in theyr armonye / That the lyon the noble kynge of all beestis wolde in the holy dayes of thys feest holde on open Court at stade / whyche he dyde to knowe ouer alle in his lande / And commanded by strayte conmyssyons and maundements that euery beest shold come thyder / in suche wyse that alle the beestis grete and smale cam to the courte sauf reynard the fox / for he knewe hym self fawty and gylty in many thynges ayenst many beestis that thyder sholde comen that he durste not auenture to goo thyder / whan the kynge of alle beestis had assemblid alle his court / ther was none of them alle / but that he had complayned sore on Reynart the foxe·

The first complaynt made Isegrym the wulf on Reynart capitulo ·ij·

ISegrym the wulf wyth his lynage and frendes cam and stode to fore the kynge / And sayde hye and myghty prynce my lord the kynge I beseche yow that thurgh your grete myght / ryght / and mercy that ye wyl haue pyte on the grete trespas and the vnresonable mysdedes that reynart the foxe hath don to me and to my wyf that is to wete he is comen in to my hows

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ayenst the wylle of my wyf / And there he hath be pyssed my chyldren where as they laye in suche wyse as they therof ben woxen blynde / wherupon was a day sette / and was Iudged that reygnart sholde come and haue excused hym hierof / and haue sworen on the holy sayntes that he was not gylty therof / And whan the book wyth the sayntes was brought forth / tho had reygnart bythou[g]ht hym other wyse / And wente his waye agayn in to his hole / as he had nought sette therby / And dere kynge this knowen wel many of the bestes that now be comen hyther to your court / And yet hath he trespaced to me in many other thinges / he is not lyuyng that coude telle alle that I now leue vntolde / But the shame and vyllonye that he hath don to my wyf / that shal I neuer hyde ne suffre it vnauengyd but that he shal make to me large amendes /

The complaynt of Courtoys the hounde capitulo iij

When thyse wordes were spoken so stode there a lytyl hounde and was named courtoys / and complayned to the kynge / how that in the colde wynter in the harde froste he had ben sore forwynterd / in such wyse as he had kepte nomore mete than a puddyng / w[h]yche puddyng reygnard the foxe had taken away from hym

Tho spak thybert the catte

Wyth this so cam Tybert the catte wyth an Irous moed / and sprang in emonge them and sayde My lord the kyng / I here hier that reygnart is sore complayned on / and hier is none but that he hath ynowh to doo to clere hym self / that courtoys hier complayneth of that is passyd many yeres goon / how be it that I complayne not / that pudyng was myne / ffor I hadde wonne it by nyghte in a mylle / The myllar laye and slepe / yf courtoys had ony parte hieron / that came by me to[o] /

Thenne spak panther / Thynke ye Tybert that it were good that reynard sholde not be complayned on / he is a very murderer / a rouer / and a theef / he loueth noman so wel / not our lord the kyng here that he wel wold that he shuld lese good and worshyp / so that he myght wynne as moche as a legge of a

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fat henne / I shal telle yow what I sawe hym do yesterday to Cuwaert the hare that hier standeth in the kynges pees and saufgarde / he promysed to Cuwart and sayde he wold teche hym his credo / and make hym a good chapelayn / he made hym goo sytte bytwene his legges and sange and cryde lowde Credo. Credo. my waye laye ther by there that I herde this songe / Tho wente I ner and fonde maister reynard that had lefte that he fyrst redde and songe / and bygan to playe his olde playe / ffor he had caught kywaert by the throte / and had I not that tyme comen he sholde haue taken his lyf from hym like as ye hiere may see on kywaert the hare the fress[h]e wounde yet / ffor sothe my lord the kyng yf ye suffre this vnpunyshyd and lete hym go quyte that hath thus broken your peas / And wyl do no right after the sentence and Iugement of your men / your Chyldren many yeris herafter shal be myspreysed and blamed therfore /

Sykerly panther sayd Isegrym ye saye trouthe / hit were good that right and Iustyse were don / for them that wolde fayn lyue in peas /

How grymbart the dasse the fores susters sone spack for reynart and answerd to fore the kynge. capitulo. .iiij.

Tho spack Grymbart the dasse / and was Reynarts suster sone with an angrey moed / Sir Isegrym that is euyl sayd it is a comyn prouerbe An Enemyes mouth / saith seeld wel / what leye ye / and wyte ye myn Eme Reynart / I wold that ye wolde a venture that who of yow tweyne had moste trespaced to other sholde hange by the necke as a theef on a tree / But and yf he were as wel in this court and as wel wyth the kynge as ye be / it shold not be thought in hym / that it were ynowh / that ye shold come and aske hym forgyuenes ye haue byten and nypte myn vncle wyth your felle and sharp teeth many mo tymes than I can telle / yet wil I telle some poyntes that I wel knowe / knowe not ye how ye mysdeled on the plays / whiche he threwe doun fro the carre / whan ye folowed after fro ferre / And ye ete the good plays allone / and gaf hym nomore than the grate or

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bones / whyche ye myght not ete your self / In lyke wyse dyde ye to hym also of the fatte vlycche of bacon / whiche sauourd so wel / that ye allone ete in your bely / and whan myn Eme askyd his parte / tho answerd ye hym agayn in scorne / Reynart fayr yonglyng I shal gladly gyue you your part / but myn eme gate ne had nought / ne was not the better / Notwithstandyng he had wonnen the flycche of bacon wyth grete drede / ffor the man cam and threw hym in a sacke / that he scarsely cam out wyth his lyf / Suche maner thynges hath reynart many tymes suffred thurgh ysegrym.

O ye lordes thynke ye that this is good / yet is ther more / he complayneth how that reynart myn eme hath moche trespaced to hym by cause of his wyf / Myn Eme hath leyn by her but that is wel seuen yer to fore / er he wedded her / and yf reynart for loue and curtosye dyde with her his wille / what was that / She was sone heled therof / hierof by ryght shold be no complaynt were Isegrym wyse. he shold haue lefte that he doth to hym self no worshyp thus to sklaundre his wyf / She playneth not / now maketh kywaert the hare acomplaynt also / that thynketh me a vyseuase / yf he rede ne lerned a ryght his lesson / sholde not reynard his maister bete hym therfore / yf the scolers were not beten ne smyten and reprised of their truantrye / they shold neuer lerne /

Now complayneth Courtoys that he with payne had goten a puddyng in the wynter / at suche tyme as the coste is euyl to fynde Therof hym had be better to haue holde his pees / for he had stolen it / Male quesisti et male perdidisti hit is ryght that it be euil loste / that is euil wonne who shal blame Reynart / yf he haue taken fro a theef stolen good hit is reson who that vnderstandeth the lawe and can discerne the right / and that he be of hye burthe as myn Eme reynart is whiche knoweth wel how he shal resseyue stolen good / yet al had he courtoys hanged whan he fonde hym with the menowr / he had not moche mysdon no trespaced / Sauf ayenst the crowne / that he had don Iustyse wythoute leue wherfore for the honour of the kynge he did it not / all hath he but lytyl thanks / what skathed it hym that he is thus complayned on / Myn Eme is a gentil and a trewe man he may suffre no falshede / he doth nothyng but by his prestes counseyl And I

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saye yow syth that my lorde the kynge hath do proclamed his pees he neuer thoughte to hurte ony man / ffor he eteth no more than ones a day / he lyueth as a recluse / he chastiseth his body and wereth a sherte of heer / hit is more than a yere that he hath eten no flesshe / as I yesterday herd saye of them that cam fro hym he hath lefte and geuen ouer his Castel maleperduys / And hath bylded a cluse / theryn dwelleth he / and hunteth nomore / ne desyreth no wynnynge but he lyueth by almesse and taketh nothyng but suche as men gyue hym for charyte and doth grete penance for his synnes / and his is woxen moche pale and lene of prayeng and wakyng ffor he wolde be fayn wyth god /

Thus as grymbert his eme stode and preched thise wordes / so sawe they comen doun the hylle to hem chauntecler the cock and brought on abiere a deed henne of whom reynart had byten the heed of[f] / and that muste be shewed to the kynge for to haue knowleche therof.

How the Cocke complayned on reynart capitulo .v°.

CHauntecler cam forth and smote pyteously his handes and his fetheris and on eche side of the byer wenten tweyne sorouful hennes that one was alled cantart and that other goode henne Crayant they were two the fayrest hennes that were bytwene holland and arderne / Thise hennes bare eche of them a brennyg tapre whiche was longe and strayte / Thise two hennes were coppens susters / And they cryed so pitously / Alas and weleaway for the deth of her dere suster coppen / Two yonge hennes bare the byere which kakled so heuyly and wepte so lowde for the deth of coppen their moder that it was ferre herde / thus cam they to gydre to fore the kynge /

And chantecleer tho seyde / Mercyful lord / my lord the kynge plese it yow to here our complaynte / And abhorren the grete scathe that reynart hath don to me and my children that hiere stonden / it was so that in the begynnyng of appryl whan the weder is fayr / as that I as hardy and prowde / bycause of the grete lynage that I am comen of and also hadde / ffor I had viij fayr sones and seuen fayr doughters whiche my wyf had hatched. and they were alle stronge

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and fatte and wente in ayerde whiche was walled round a boute / In whiche was a shadde where in were six grete dogges whiche had to tore and plucked many a beestis skyn in suche wyse as my chyldren were not aferd / On whom Reynart the theef had grete enuye by cause they were so sure that he cowde none gete of them / how wel oftymes hath this fel theef goon rounde aboute this wal / and hath leyde for vs in suche wyse that the dogges haue be sette on hym and haue hunted hym away / And ones they leep on hym vpon the banke / And that cost hym somwhat for his thefte / I saw that his skyn smoked neuertheles he wente his waye / god amende it /

Thus were we quyte of reynart a longe whyle / atte laste cam he in lyknes of an heremyte / and brought to me a lettre for to rede sealed wyth the kynges seal / in whiche stode wreton that the kynge had made pees oueral in his royame / and that alle maner beestis and fowlles shold doo none harme ner scathe to ony other / yet sayd he to me more / that he was a cloysterer or a closyd recluse be comen / And that he wolde receyue grete penance for his synnes / he shewd me his slauyne and pylche and an heren sherte ther vnder / and thenne sayd he / syr Chaunteclere after thys tyme be no more aferd of me ne take no hede / ffor I now wil ete nomore flesshe / I am forthon so olde / That I wolde fayn remembre my sowle I will now go forth / for I haue yete to saye my sexte / none / and myn euensonge / to god I bytake yow / Tho wente reynart thens sayeng his Credo / and leyde hym vnder an hawthorn / Thenne / was I glad and mery / and also toke none hede / And wente to my chyldren and clucked hem to gydre And wente wythout the wal for to walke wherof is moche harme comen to vs / for reynart laye vnder a busshe and cam krepyng bitwene vs and the yate / so that he ca[u]ght one of my chyldren and leyd hym in his male / wherof whe haue had grete harme / for syth he hath tasted of hym / ther myght neuer hunter ne hounnde saue ne kepe hym from vs / he hath wayted by nyghte and daye in suche wyse that he hath stolen so many of my chyldren that of ·xv. I haue but foure / in suche wyse hath this theef forslongen them / And yet yesterday was coppen my doughter that hier lyeth vpon the byer with the houndes rescowed This complayne I to yow gracious kynge / haue pyte on myn grete and vnresonable damage and losse of my fayre chyldren /

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How the kyng spack touchyng this complaynt ca. vj:

THenne spack the kynge / Syre dasse here ye this wel of the recluse your Eme he hath fasted and prayde that yf I lyue a yere he shal aby[d]e it / Nowe herke chauntecler / your playnt is ynough your doughter that lyeth here dede / we wyl gyue to her the dethes right we may kepe her no longer / we wil betake her to god / we wylle syngen here vygylie / and brynge her worshipfully on erthe / and thenne we wille speke wyth thise lordes and take counseyl how we may do ryght and Iustyse of thys grete murdre / and brynge this fals theef to the lawe /

Tho begonne they placebo domino / with the verses that to longen whiche yf I shold saye / were me to longe / whan this vigilye was don and the commendacion / she was leyde in the pytte / and ther vpon was leyde a marble stone polyshed as clere as ony glas and theron was hewen in grete letters in this wyse coppe chanteklers doughter / whom Reynart the fox hath byten lyeth hier vnder buryed / complayne ye her ffor / she is shamefully comen to her deth /

after this the kynge sente ffor his lordes and wysest of his counseyl for to take aduys / how this grete murdre and trespaas shold be punysshyd on reynart the foxe / Ther was concluded and apoynted for the beste / that reynart shold be sent ffore and that he lefte not for ony cause / But he cam in to the kynges court ffor to here wat shold be sayd to hym / And that bruyn the bere shold do the message.

the kynge thought that alle this was good and saide to brune the bere syr brune I wyl that ye doo this message / but see wel to for your self / ffor reynart is a shrewe / and felle and knoweth so many wyles that he shal lye and flatre / and shal thynke how he may begyle deceyue and brynge yow to some mockerye /

tho sayd brune what good lord late it allone / deceyueth me the foxe / so haue I ylle lerned my casus / I trowe he shal come to late to mocque me / Thus departed brune meryly fro thens / but it is to drede that he cam not so meryly agayn /

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how brunne the beere was sped of Reynart the fore/ capitulo .viij°.

NOw is brune goon on his waye toward the foxe wyth astowte moede/whiche supposed wel that the foxe sholde not haue begyled hym/as he cam in a derke wode in a forest were as reynard had a bypath whan he was hunted/ther bysyde was an hie montayne and lande/ and there muste brune in the myddel goon ouer for to goo to maleperduys/for reynart had many a dwellyng place/but the castle of maleperduys was the beste and the fastest burgh that he had/Ther laye he Inne whan he had nede and was in ony drede or fere. Now whan bruyn was comen to maleperduys he fonde the yate faste shette/tho wente he to fore the yate and satte vpon his taylle and called Reynart be ye at home I am brownyng/the kynge hath sente me for yow that ye sholde come to court/for to plete your caas/he hath sworn there by his god/come ye not/or brynge I yow not with me for t[o]abyde suche right and sentence as shal be there gyuen/ it shal coste you your lyf he wyl hange you/or sette you on the ratte/reynart doo by my counseyl and come to the court/

Reynart laye within the gate as he ofte was wonte to doo for the warmth of the sonne/whan reynart herd bruyn tho wente he Inneward in to his hole/for maleperduys was ful of hooles/hier one hool and there an other and yonder an other/narowe. crooked and longe wyth/many weyes to goo out/ whiche he opend and shette after that he had nede/whan he had ony proye brought home/or that he wiste that ony sought hym for hys mysdedes and trespaces/thenne he ran and hydde hym fro his enemyes in to hys secrete chambres/ that they coude not fynde hym/by whiche he deceyuyd many a beest that sought hym/and tho thought reynart in hym self how he myght best brynge the beere in charge and nede/ and that he abode in worship/

IN this thoughte reynart cam out and sayde bruyn eme ye be welcome/I herde you wel to fore/but I was in myn eue[n]song therfore haue I the lenger taryed a lytyl/ dere eme he hath don to you no good seruyse and I can hym no thank that hath sente you ouer this longe hylle/for I see that ye be also wery that the swete renneth doun by your chekys/

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it was no nede / I had neuertheles comen to court to morowe but I sorowe now the lasse / for your wyse counseyl shal wel helpe me in the court / and coude the kyng fynde none lasse messager but yow ffor to sende hyther / that is grete wonder / ffor next the kynge ye be the mooste gentyl and richest of leeuys and of lande / I wolde wel that we were now at the court but I fere me that I shal not conne wel goo thyder / for I haue eten so moche new mete / that me thynketh my bely wylle breke or cleue asonder and by cause the mete was nyewe / I ete the more /

tho spack the bere lyef neue what mete haue ye eten that maked yow so ful /

dere eme that I ete what myght it helpe yow that yf I tolde you / I ete but symple mete a poure man is no lord that may ye knowe eme by me / we poure folke must ete oftymes suche as we gladly wolde not ete yf we had better / they were grete hony combes which I muste nedes ete for hunger / they haue made my bely so grete / that I can nowher endure /

Bruyn tho spack anone / alas reynart what saye ye / sette ye so lytyl by hony / me ought to preyse and loue it aboue alle mete / lief reynart helpe me that I myght gete a deel of this hony / and as longe as I lyue I shal be to you a tryew friende and abyde by yow as ferre as ye helpe me that I may haue a parte of this hony /

how bruyn ete the hony capitulo. .viij:

BRuyn eme I had supposed that ye had iaped therwyth /

so help me god reynart nay / I shold not gladly iape with yow /

thenne spacke the rede reynart is it thenne ernest that ye loue so wel the hony / I shal do late you haue so moche that ten of yow shold not ete it at one mele / myght I gete therwith your friendship /

not we ten reyner neue sayd the bere how shold that be had I alle the hony that is bytwene this and portyngale I shold wel ete it allone·

reynard sayde· what saye ye Eme / hier by dwelleth an husbondman named lantfert whiche hath so moche hony

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that ye shold not ete it in· vij. yere whiche ye shal haue in your holde. yf ye wille be to me friendly and helpyng ayenst myn enemyes in the kynges court/

thenne promysed bruyn the bere to hym. that yf he myght haue his bely full· he wold truly be to hym to fore alle other a faythful frende/

herof laughed reynart the shrewe and sayde/yf ye wolde haue vij hamber barelis ful I shal wel gete them and helpe you to haue them/These wordes plesyd the bere so wel and made hym so moche to lawhe/that he coude not wel stande

Tho thought reynart/this is good luck I shal lede hym thyder that he shal lawhe by mesure.

Reynard sayd thenne/this mater may not be longe taryed/ I muste payne my self for you/ye shal wel vnderstande the very yonste and good wyl that I bere to you ward I knowe none in al my lygnage that I nou wolde laboure fore thus sore/

that thanked hym the bere and thought he taryed longe/

Now eme late vs goo a good paas and folowe ye me/I shal make you to haue as moche hony as ye may bere/the foxe mente of goode strokes but the caytyf markyd not what the foxe mente/and they wente so longe to gydre that they cam vnto lantferts yerde/tho was sir bruyn mery/

Now herke of lantfert is it true that men saye/so was lantfert a stronge carpenter of grete tymbre/and had brought that other day to fore in to his yerde a grete oke whiche he had begonne to cleue And as men be woned he had smeten two betels the rinone after that other in suche wyse the oke was wyde open whereof reynart was glad/for he had founde it right as he wisshed/And sayde to the bere all lawhyng/ see nou wel sharply to/in this tree is so moche hony that it is without mesure/asaye yf ye can come therin and ete but lytil for though the hony combes be swete and good yet beware that ye ete not to[o] many. but take of them by measure.that ye cacche no harme in your body· for swete eme I shold be blasmed yf they dyde you ony harme.

what reynart cosyn sorowe ye not for me. wene ye that I were a fole.

mesure is good in alle mete· reynart sayde· ye saye trouthe. wherfore shold I sorowe· goo to the[e]nde and Crepe theryn

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bruyn the bere hasted sore toward the hony. and trad in wyth his two formest feet: and put his heed ouer his eeris in to the clyft of the tree. And reynart sprang lyghtly and brak out the betle of the tree. Tho helped the bere nether flateryng ne chydyng. he was fast shette in the tree thus hath the neueu wyth deceyte brought his eme in pryson in the tree in suche wyse as he coude not gete out wyth myght ne wyth crafte / hede ne foote /

What prouffyteth bruyn the bere that he stronge and hardy is / that may not helpe them / he sawe wel that he begyled was he began to howle and to braye / and crutched wyth the hynder feet and made suche a noyse and rumour that lantfert cam out hastely / and knewe nothyng what this myght be / and brought in his hand a sharpe hoke / bruyn the bere laye in the clyfte of the tree in grete fere and drede / and helde fast his heed and nyped both his fore feet / he wrange he wrastled / and cryed / and all was for nought / he wiste not how he myght gete out /

reynar[t] the foxe sawe fro ferre how that lantfert the carpenter cam and tho spack reynart to the bere / is that hony good how is it now / ete not to[o] moche it shold do you harme / ye shold not thenne wel conne goo to the court whan lantfert cometh yf ye haue wel eten he shal yeue you better to drynke and thenne it shal not styke in your throte /

Affter thise wordes tho torned hym reynart toward his castel and lantfert cam and fonde the bere fast taken in the tree / thenne ranne he faste to his neyghbours and sayde/come alle in to my yerde / ther is a beere taken/the worde anone sprange oneral in the thorpe / ther ne bleef nether man ne wyf / but alle ranne theder as fast as they coude / eueryche wyth his wepen / some wyth a staf / some with a rake / some with a brome / some with a stake of the hegghe and some wyth a flayel / and the preest of the chirche had the staf of the crosse / and the clerk brought a vane The prestis wyf Iulok cam with her dystaf / she sat tho and spanne / Ther cam olde wymen that for age had not one toeth in her heed /

now was bruyn the bere nygh moche sorowe / that he allone muste stande ayenst them alle whan he herde alle this grete noyse and crye / he wrastled and plucked so harde and so sore /

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that he gate out his heed / but he lefte behynde all the skyne and bothe his eeris / In suche wyse th_t neuer man sawe fowller ne lothyer beest / for the blode ran ouer his eyen / and or he coude gete out his feet / he muste lete there his clawes or nayles and this roughe hande / This market cam to hym euyl / ffor he supposed neuer to haue goon / [h]is feet were so sore / and he myght not see for the blode whiche ran so ouer his eyen /

Lantfert cam to hym wyth the preest and forth with alle the parysshe / and began to smyte and stryke sore vpon his heed and visage he receyued there many a sore stroke / euery man beware hierby. who hath harme and scathe / euery man wil be ther at and put more to / That was wel seen on the bere / for they were alle fiers and wroth on the bere grete and smal / ye[a] hughelyn wyth the croked lege· and ludolf with the brode longe noose / they were booth wroth That one had an leden malle· and that other a grete leden wapper / ther wyth they wappred and al for slyngred hym / syr bertolt with the longe fyngers lantfert. and ottram the longe. thys dyde to the bere more harme than al the other that one had a sharpe hoke / and that other a croked staf wel leded on th[e]ende for to playe at the balle / Baetkyn / ende aue abelquak my dame baue / and the preest with his staf / and dame Iulok his wyf thise wroughten to the bere so moche harme / that they wold fayn haue brought hym fro his lyf to deth / they smote and stacke hym al that they cowde /

bruyn the beere satte and syghed and groned / and muste take suche as was gyuen to hym / but lantfert was the worthiest of byrthe of them alle / and made moste noyse / for dame pogge of chafporte was his moder / and his fader was Macob the stoppelmaker / a moche stowte man there as he was allone / bruyn receyued of hem many a caste of stones / Tofore hem alle sprang forst lanteferts brother with a staf / and smote the bere on the heed that he ne herde ne sawe / and there with the bere sprange vp bytwene the bushe and the ryuer emonge an heep of wyuis that he threwe a deel of hem in the ryuer whiche was wyde and deep /

ther was the persons wyf one of them wherfor he was ful of sorow whan he sawe his wyf lye in the water / hym lusted no lenger to smyte the bere / but called dame Iuloke in the water now euery man see to / Alle they that may helpe her / be

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they men or wymen / I gyue to hem alle pardon of her penance and relece alle theyr synnes / alle they thenne lefte bruyn the bere lye / And dyde that the preest badde

When bruyn the bere sawe that they ranne alle from hym and ranne to saue the wymen / tho sprange he in to the water and swame alle that he coude / Thenne made the preest a grete showte and noyse and ran after the bere wyth grete anger and said come and torne agayn thow false theef / The bere swame after the beste of the streme / and lete them calle and crye / for he was glad that he was so escaped from them / he cursed and banned the hony tree / and the foxe also that had so betrayed hym / that he had cropen therin so depe that he loste boothe his hood and his eeris / And so forth he droof in the streem wel a ij or iij myle / Tho waxe he so wery that he wente to lande for to sitte and reste hym / ffor he was heuy / he groned and syghed / and the blode lepe ouer his eyen / he drough his breth lyke as one sholde haue deyde /

Now herke how the foxe dyde / er he cam fro lantferts hows he had stolen a fatte henne and had leyde her in his male And ranne hastely away by a by path were he wende that noman should haue comen / he ranne toward the Ryuer that he swette / he was so glad that he wist not whatto do for Ioye / ffor he hoped that the bere had be dede / he sayde / I haue now wel spedde for he that sholde moste haue hyndred me in the court is now dede / and none shal wyte me therof / may I not thenne by right / be wel glad / with thise wordes the foxe loked to the ryuer ward and espyed where bruyn the bere laye and rested hym / Tho was the foxe sorier and heuyer then to fore was mery / and was as angry and sayde In chydyng to lantfert / alas lantfert lewde fool god gyue hym a shames deth that hath loste suche good venyson whiche is good and fatte / and hath late hym goo whiche was taken to his hande many aman wolde gladly haue eten of hym. he hath loste ariche and fatte bere / Thus al chydyng he cam to the ryuer / where he fonde the beere sore wounded / bebled / and right seke / whiche he myght thanke none better therof than Reynart whiche spacke to the bere in skorne /

Chiere priestre / dieu vous garde wylle ye see the rede theef

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sayde the bere to hym self / the rybaud and the felle diere here I se hym comen /

Thenne sayd the foxe / haue ye ought forgoten at lantferts / haue ye also payd hym for the hony combes that ye stale fro hym / yf ye haue not. it were agrete shame and not honeste / I wyl rather be the messager my self for to goo and paye hym / was the hony not / good / I knowe yet more of the same prys. dere Eme telle me er I goo hens / In to what ordre wille ye goo. that we[a]re this newe hode / were ye amonke or an abbot· he that shoef your crowne / hath nyped of[f] your eeris / ye haue lost your toppe And don of[f] your gloues / I trowe veryly that ye wyl go synge complyn·

Alle this herde bruyn the bere / and wexe alle angry and sory for he myght not a venge hym / he lete the foxe saye his wylle And wyth grete payne suffred it. and sterte agayn in the ryuer / and swam doun wyth the streem to that other syde /

now muste he sorowe how that he sholde come to the court / for he had loste his eeris / and the skynne wyth the clawes of his forefeet / for though a man sholde haue slayn hym he coude not go / And yet he muste nedes forth / but he wist not how

Now he[a]re how he dyde. he satte vpon his hammes / and began to rutsele ouer his tayl / and whan he was so wery / he wentled and tombled nyghe half a myle / this dyde he with grete payne so longe tyl atte laste he cam to the courte. And whan he was seen so comyng fro ferre / Some doubted what it myght be that cam so wentelyng

The kynge atte laste knewe hym / and was not wel payd and sayde This is bruyn the bere my frende / lord god who hath wounded hym thus he is passyng reed on his heed. me thynketh he is hurte vnto the deth where may he haue ben.

ther wyth is the bere come to fore the kynge and sayde /

The complaynt of the bere vpon the foxe· capo ·ix·

I complayne to yow mercyful lorde syre kynge / so as ye may see how that I am handled prayeng you t[o]auenge it vpon reynart the felle beest· ffor I haue goten this in your seruyse. I haue loste bothe my formest feet / my chekes and myn eeris by his false deceyte and treson

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The kynge sayde how durst this fals theef Reyna[r]t doo this / I saye to yow bruyn and swere by my crowne / I shal so auenge you on hym / that ye shal conne me thanke /

he sente for alle the wyse beestis / and desired counseyl how that he myght auenge this ouer grete wronge / that the foxe had don / Thenne the counseyl concluded olde and yong / that he shold be sente fore and dayed ernestly again for t[o]abyde suche Iugement as shold there be gyuen on hym of alle his trespaces And they thought that the catte tybert myght best do this message yf he wolde / for he is right wyse / The kynge thought this counceyl good /

How the kynge sente another tyme tybert the catte for the foxe, and how tybert spedde with reynart the foxe / ca° xi°

Thenne the kynge saide sir tybert / ye shal now goo to reynart and saye to hym this seconde tyme that he come to court vnto the plee for to answere / for though he be felle to other beestis· he trusteth you wel / and shal doo by your counseyl. and telle yf he come not / he shal haue the thirde warnyng and be dayed and yf he thenne come not / we shal procede by ryght ayenste hym and alle hys lygnage wythout mercy /

Tybert spack / My lord the kynge / they that this counseylde you were not my frendes what shal I doo there / he wil not for me neyther come ne abyde / I beseche you dere kynge sende some other to hym / I am lytyl and feble / bruyn the bere whiche was so grete and stronge / coude not brynge hym / how shold I thenne take it on honde /

nay said the kynge sir tybert ye ben wyse and wel lerned / Though ye be not grete / ther lyeth not on / many do more wyth crafte and connyng / than with myght and strengthe /

thenne said the catte / syth it muste nedes be don / I muste thenne take it vpon me / god yeue grace that I may wel achieue it / for my herte is heuy / and euil willed therto /

Tybert made hym / sone redy toward maleperduys / and he saw fro ferre come fleyng one of seynt martyns byrdes / tho cryde he lowde and saide al hayl / gentyl byrde / torne thy

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wynges hetherward and flee on my right side / the byrde flewh forth vpon a tree whiche stoode on the lift side of the catte / tho was tybert woo / ffor he thought hit was a shrewd token and a sygne of harme / for yf the birde had flowen on his right side / he had ben mery and glad / but now he sorowed that his Iourney shold torne to vnhappe / neuertheles he dyde as many doo / and gaf to hym self better hope than his herte sayde / he wente and ronne to maleperduys ward / and there he fonde the foxe allone standynge to fore his hous /

Tybert saide / The riche god yeue you good euen reynart / the kyng hath menaced yow / for to take your lyf from yow / yf ye come not now wyth me to the court /

The foxe tho spack and said / Tibert my dere cosyn ye be right wel come / I wolde wel truly that ye had moche good lucke / what hurted the foxe to speke fayre / though he sayd wel / his herte thoughte it not and that shal be seen / er they departe /

reynart sayde wylle we this nyght be to gydre / I wyl make you good chyere and to morow erly in the dawnyng we wyl to gydre goo to the court / good neue late vs so doo / I haue none of my kyn / that I truste so moche to as to yow / hier was bruyn the bere the traytour he loked so shrewdly on me / and me thoughte he was so stronge / that I wolde not for a thousand marke haue goon with hym / but cosyn I wil to morow erly goo with yow /

Tybert saide / it is beste that we now goo / for the mone shyneth also light as it were daye / I neuer sawe fayrer weder /

nay dere cosyn / suche myght mete vs by daye tyme / that wold make vs good chiere / and by nyghtte parauenture myght doo vs harme / it is suspecyous to [w]alke by nyghte. Therfore a byde this nyght here by me

Tybert sayde / w[h]at sholde we ete / yf we abode here /

reynart sayde / here is but lytel to ete ye maye wel haue an hony combe good and swete / what saye ye / Tybert wyl ye ony therof.

tybert answerd I sette nought therby haue ye nothyng ellis yf ye gaf me agood fatte mows / I shold be better plesyd /

a fatte mows said reynard / dere cosyn what saye ye / here by dwelleth a preest and hath a barne by his hows ther in ben so many myse / that a man shold not lede them a way vpon

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a wayne / I haue herd the preest many tymes complayne that they dyde hym moche harme

O dere reyner lede me thyder for alle that I may doo for yow /

ye[a] tybert saye ye me trouthe / loue ye wel myes /

yf I loue hem wel said the catte / I loue myes better than ony thyng that men gyue me· knowe ye not that myes sauoure better than veneson / ye than flawnes or pasteyes wil ye wel doo. so lede me theder where the myes ben· and thenne shal ye wynne my loue. ye[a] al had ye slayn my fader moder and alle my kyn.

Reynart sayd ye moke and Jape therwyth·

the catte saide so helpe me god I doo not.

Tybert said the foxe wiste I that veryly I wolde yet this nyght make that ye shuld be ful of myes.

reynart quod he· ful that were many.

tyberte ye Iape /

reynart quod he in trouth I doo not / yf I hadde a fatte mows / I wold not gyue it for a golden noble /

late vs goo thenne / tybert quod the foxe I wyl brynge yow to the place / er I goo fro you /

reyner quod the foxe [*or rather* the cat] / vpon your saufconduyt / I wolde wel goo wyth you to monpelier /

late vs thenne goo said the foxe we tarye alto longe /

Thus wente they forth withoute lettyng to the place / where as they wold be to the prestes barne whiche was faste wallid aboute with a mude wal and the nyght to fore the foxe had broken in and had stolen fro the preest a good fatte henne / and the preest alle angry had sette a gryn to fore the hool to auenge hym / for he wold fayn haue take the foxe / this knewe wel the felle theef the foxe And said sir tybert cosyn crepe in to this hool / and ye shal not longe tarye but that ye shal catche myes by grete heepis / herke how they pype. whan ye be ful / come agayn / I wil tarye here after you be fore this hole / we wil to morowe goo to gyder to the court. Tybert why tarye ye thus longe come of[f] / and so maye we retorne sone to my wyf. whiche wayteth after vs / and shal make vs good chiere

Tybert saide / reynart cosyn is it thenne your counseyl that I goo in to this hole. Thise prestes ben so wyly and shrewyssh / I drede to take harme /

O ho tybert said the fox I sawe you neuer so sore aferde / what eyleth yow /

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the catte was ashamed and sprange in to the hoole. And anon he was caught in the gryn by the necke er he wyste / thus deceyuyd reynart his ghest and cosyn /

As tybert was waer of the grynne / he was a ferde and sprange forth / the grynne wente to / thenne he began he to wrawen / for he was almost ystranglyd / he called he cryed and made a shrewd noyse /

reynart stode to fore the hool and herde al / and was wel a payed and sayde / tybert loue ye wel myes / be they fatte and good / knewe the preeste herof or mertynet / they be so gentyl that they wolde brynge yow sawce / Tybert ye synge and eten / is that the guyse of the court / lord god yf ysegrym ware there by yow in suche reste as ye now be thenne shold I be glad / for ofte he hath don me scathe and harme /

tybert coude not goo awaye / but he mawede and galped so lowde / that martynet sprang vp / and / cryde lowde / god be thanked my gryn hath taken the theef that hath stolen our hennes / aryse vp we wil rewarde hym /

Wyth these wordes aroose the preest in an euyl tyme and waked alle them that were in the hows / and cryde wyth a lowede vois / the foxe is / take

there leep[t] and ranne alle that there was[.] the preest hym self ranne al moder naked / mertynet was the first that cam to tybert / the preest toke to locken his wyf an offryng candel and bad her lyght it atte fyer / and he smote tybert with a grete staf / Ther receyuid tybert many a grete stroke ouer alle his body / mertynet was so angry that he smote the catte an eye out / the naked preest lyfte vp and shold haue gyuen a grete stroke to tybert / but tybert that sawe that he muste deye sprange bytwene the prestes legges wyth his clawes and with his teeth that he raught out his ryght colyon or balock stone / that leep becam yl to the preest and to his grete shame.

This thynge fyl doun vpon the floer / whan dame Iulocke knewe that / she sware by her faders sowle / that she wolde it had coste her alle th[e]offryng of a hole yere / that the preest had not had that harme hurte and shame / and that it had not happed and said / in the deueles name was the grynne there sette / see mertynet lyef sone / this is of thy faders

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harneys / This is a grete shame and to me a grete hurte / for though he be heled herof yet he is but a loste man to me and also shal neuer conne doo that swete playe and game /

The foxe stode wythoute to fore the hole and herde alle thyse wordes / and lawhed so sore that he vnnethe coude stonde / he spack thus al softly / dame Iulock be al stylle / and your grete sorowe synke / Al hath the preest loste one of his stones it shal not hyndre hym he shal doo wyth you wel ynowh ther is in the world many a chapel / in whiche is rongen but one belle / thus scorned and mocked the foxe / the prestes wyf dam iulock that was ful of sorowe /

The preest fyl doun a swoune / they toke hym vp and brought hym agayn to bedde. tho wente the foxe agayn in to his borugh ward / and lefte tybert the catte in grete drede and Ieopardye / for the foxe wiste none other but that the catte was nygh deed / but whan tybert the catte sawe them al besy aboute the preest tho began he to byte and gnawe the grenne in the myddel a sondre / and sprange out of the hool and wente rollyng and wentlyng towards the kyngs court or he cam theder it was fayr day and the sonne began to ryse / And he cam to the court as a poure wyght / he had caught harme atte prestes hows by the helpe and counseyl of the foxe / his body was al to beten / and blynde on the one eye / whan the kynge wyste this / that tybert was thus arayed / he was sore angry and menaced reynart / the theef sore / and anone gadred his counseyl to wyte what they wold a[d]uyse hym / how he myght brynge the foxe to the lawe and how he sholde be fette

Tho spack sir grymbart whiche was the foxes suster sone and saide ye lordes / thowgh my eme were twyes so bad and shrewessh / yet is ther remedye ynough / late hym be don to / as to a free man whan he shal be Iuged / he muste be warned the thirde tyme for al and yf he come not thanne / he is thenne gylty in alle the trespaces that ben leyd ayenst hym and his or complayned on /

grymbart who wolde ye that sholde goo and daye hym to come / who wil auenture for hym his eeris / hys eye or his lyf whiche is so fel a beest / I trowe ther is none here so moche a fool /

grymbert spack / so helpe me god I am so moche a fool / that I wil do this message myself to reynart / yf ye wille commande me /

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How grymbert the dasse broughte the fore to the lawe to fore the kynge / capitulo .xj°.

NOw go forth gymbart and see wel to fore yow reynart is so felle and fals and so subtyl / that ye nede wel to loke aboute yow / and to beware of hym / Grimbert said he shold see welto /

thus wente grymbart to maleperduys ward / and when he cam theder / he fonde reynart the foxe at home / and dame ermelyn his wyf laye by her whelpis in a derke corner /

Tho spack grymberd and salewed his eme and his aunte / and saide to reynart eme beware that your absence hurte yow not in suche maters as be leyde and complayned on yow but yf ye thynke it good / it is hye tyme that ye come wyth me to the court / The wythholdyng you fro it can doo yow no good there is moche thynge complayned ouer you / and this is the thirde warnyng / and I telle you for trouth yf ye abyde to morow al day / ther may no mercy helpe you ye shal see that wyth in thre dayes that your hows shal be byseged al aboute / and ther shal be made to fore it galowes and racke / I saie you truly ye shal not thenne escape neyther with wyf ne wyth chylde / The kynge shal take alle your liuys fro yow / therfore it is beste that ye goo wyth me to the court / your subtyl wyse counseyl shal parauenture auaylle you / ther ben gretter auentures falle er this for it may happe ye shal goo quyte of all the complayntes that ben complayned on you / and alle your enemyes shal abyde in the shame / ye haue oftymes don more and gretter thingis than this.

REynart the foxe answerd / ye saye soth / I trowe it is beste that I goo wyth you for ther lacketh my counseyl parauenture the kynge shal be mercyful to me yf I maye come to speke wyth hym / and see hym vnder his eyen / though I had don moche more harme / the court may not stonde without me / that shal the kynge wel vnderstande· Though some be so felle to me ward / yet it goth not to the herte / alle the counseyl shal conclude moche by me / where grete courtes ben gadred of kynges or of grete lordes / where as nedeth subtyl counseyl / ther muste reynart fynde / the subtyl

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meanes / they maye wel speke and saye theyr aduys but the myne is beste / and that goth to fore alle other / in the courte ben many that haue sworen to doo me the werst they can / and that causeth me a parte to be heuy in my herte / ffor many maye doo more than one allone / that shal hurte me / neuertheles neuew it is better I goo wyth yow to the court and answere for my self / than to sette me / my wyf / and my chyldren in a venture for to be loste / aryse vp late vs goo hens / he is ouer myghty for me / I muste doo as he wylle / I can not bettre it I shal take it paciently and suffre it.

REynert saide to his wyf dame ermelyn I betake yow my chyldren that ye see wel to hem / and specyally to reynkin my ynogest sone / He belyketh me so wel I hope he shal folowe my stappes And ther is rosel apassyng fayr theef / I loue hem as wel as ony may loue his chyldren / Yf god gyue me grace / that I maye escape I shal whan I come agayn thanke yow wyth fair wordes Thus toke Reynart leue of his wyf /

A gods / how sorouful a bode ermelyn wyth her smale whelpis / ffor the vytayller and he that sorowed for malperduys was goon his way / And the hows not pourueyed ne vitaylled.

How reynard shroef hym capitulo. xij.

WHan reynart and grymbert had goon a whyle to gydre / tho saide reynart / dere cosyn now am I in grete fere / for I goo in drede and ieopardye of my lyf / I haue so moche repentaunce for my synnes that I wil shryue me dere cosyn to yow / here is none other preest to gete yf I were shryuen of my synnes / my soule shold be the clerer /

grymbert ansuerde / Eem wil ye shryue you / thenne muste ye promyse firste to leue your steelyng and rouynge

reynart saide that wiste he wel / now herke dere cosyn what I shal saye / Confiteor tibi pater of alle the mysdedes that I haue don / And gladly wil receyue penance for them /

Grymbert sayde what saye ye / wylle ye shryue yow / thenne saye it in englissh that I may vnderstande. yow

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reynart sayde / I haue trespaced ayenst alle the beestis that lyue in especyal ayenst bruyn the bere myn Eem whom I made his crowne al blody / And taughte tybert the catte to catche myes for I made her leepe in a grenne wher she was al to beten / also I haue trespaced gretly ayenst chanteclere with his children / for I haue made hym quyte of a grete dele of hem

The kynge is not goon al quyte / I haue sklandred hym and the quene many tymes / that they shal neuer be cleer therof yet haue I begyled ysegrym the wulf ofter than I can telle wel I called hym eme / but that was to deceyue hym / he is nothyng of my kyn / I made hym a monke / [at] Eelmare / where I my self also becam one / And that was to his hurte and no prouffyte / I made bynde his feet to the belle rope / the ryngyng of the belle thought hym so good that he wolde lerne to rynge wherof he had shame / ffor he range so sore that alle the folke in the strete were aferd therof and meruaylled what myght be on the belle / And ranne thyder to fore he had comen to axe the religyon / wherfore he was beten almost to the deth / after this I taught hym to catche fyssh where he receyuid many a stroke / also I ledde hym to the richest prestes hows that was in vermedos / This preest had aspynde wherin henge many a good flitche of bacon / wherin many a tyme I was wonte to fyl my bely / in this spynde I had made an hole / in whiche I made ysegrym to crepe / There fonde he tubbes with beef and many goed flytches of bacon wherof he ete so moche withoute mesure / that he myght not come out at the hole where he wente in / his bely was so grete and ful of the mete / and whan he entred his bely was smal / I wente in to the village and made there a grete showte and noyse / yett herke what I dyde thenne I ranne to the preest wher he satte at the table and ete / And hadde to fore hym as fatte capone as a man myght fynde / that capone caught I and ranne my weye therwith al that I myghte / the preest cryed out and said / take and slee the foxe / I trowe that neuer man sawe more wonder / the foxe cometh in my hows and taketh my capoone fro my table / where sawe euer man an hardyer theef / and as me thought he toke his table knyf and casted it at me / but he touched me not I ranne away / he shoof the table from hym / and folewed me cryeng kylle and slee hym / I to goo and they after and many moo cam after which alle thought to hurte me /

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TRanne so longe that I cam where as isegrym was / and there I lete falle the capoone / for it was to[o] heuy for me / and ayenst my wille I lefte it there / and thenne I sprange thurgh an hole where as I wolde be / and as the preest toke vp the capone. he espyed isegrym and cryde smyte doun here frendes here is the theef the wulf / see wel to that he escape vs not· they ranne alle to gydre wyth stokkes and staues and made a grete noyse that alle the neyghbours camen oute. and gauen hym many a shrewde stroke / and threwe at hym grete stones / in suche wyse that he fyl doun as he had been deed / They slepid hym and drewe hym ouer stones and ouer blockes wythout the village and threwe hym in to a dyche and there he laye al the nyght / I wote neuer how he cam thens / syth I haue goten of hym / for as moche as I made hym to fylle his bely / that he sware that he wolde be myn helpe an hole yere.

Tho ledde I hym to a place where I tolde hym ther were vij· hennes and a cocke whiche satte on a perche and were moche fatte / And ther stode a faldore by / and we clymmed ther vp / I sayde to hym yf he wolde bileue me / and that he wolde crepe in to the dore / he sholde fynde many fatte hennes / Isegrym wente al lawhyng to the dore ward and crope a lityl in / and tasted here and there / and at laste he sayde to me reynarde ye borde and iape with me / for what I seche I fynde not thenne said I / eme yf ye wyl fynde crepe forther in / he that wil wynne / he muste laboure and auenture / They that were wonte to sytte there / I haue them a waye thus I made hym to seche ferther in / and shooue him forth so ferre / that he fylle doun vpon the floer for the perche was narow / and he fill so grete a falle / that they sprange vp alle that slepte / and they that laye nexte the fyre cryden that the valdore was open and somthyng was falle and they wiste not w[h]at it myght be /

They roose vp and lyghte a candel / and whan they sawe hym they smeton beten and wounded hym to the deth / I haue broughte hym thus in many a iepardye / moo than I gan now rekene / I sholde fynde many moo / yf I me wel bythoughte / whiche I shal telle you here after / Also I haue bydryuen wyth dame erswynde his wyf / I wolde I had not don

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it / I am sory for it / hit is to her grete shame / and that me repenteth /

grymbert saide / Eme I vnderstande you not /

he sayde I haue trespaced with his wyf /

ye shryue you / as though ye helde somwhat behynde / I wote not what ye mene ne where ye haue lerned this langage /

Ach dere eme it were grete shame yf I shold saye it oppenly as it happed / I haue leyen by myn aunte / I am your eme I shold angre you yf I spak vylanye of wymmen / neueu now haue I tolde yow alle that I can thynke on / sette me penaunce / and assoylle me / ffor I haue grete repentaunce /

Grymbert was subtyl and wyse / he brake a rodde of[f] a tree and saide / eme now shal ye smyte your self thryes with this rodde on your body / And thenne leye it doun vpon the grounde / and sprynge thre tymes ther ouer without bowyng of your legges and wythout stomblyng / and thenne shul ye take it vp and kysse it frendly in token of mekenes and obedience of your penance that I gaf yow / herwith be ye quyte of alle synnes that ye haue don to this day for I forgeue it yow al /

the foxe was glad /

tho sayd grymbert to his eme / Eme see now forthon / that ye doo good werkis / rede your psalmes / goo to chirche / faste and kepe your halydayes / and gyue your allmesse / and leue your synful and yl lyf / your thefte and your treson and so maye ye come to mercy /

the foxe promysed that he wold so doo / and thenne wente they bothe to gydre to the court ward /

A Lytel besyde the waye as they wente stode a cloyster of back nonnes. where many ghees / hennes and capones wente withoute the walles / and as they wente talkynge the foxe brought grymberte out of the right waye thyder and wythout the walles by the barne went the polayle / The foxe espyed them and saw a fatte yong capone whiche wente allone fro his felaws / and leep and caught hym that the fethers flewh aboute his eeris but the capone escaped /

grymbert sayde what eme cursyd man what wil ye doo / wille ye for one of thise poletes falle agayn in alle your synnes of whiche ye haue shryuen yow / ye ought sore repente you /

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reynart answerd / truly cosyn I had al forgoten / praye god that he forgeue it me for I wil neuer do so more /

thenne torned they agayn ouer alityl brydge / yet the foxe alway loked after the polaylle / he coude not refrayne hym self / that whiche cleuid by the bone / myght not out of the flesshe / though he shold be hanged / he coude not lete the lokyng after the polayll as fer as he myght see them /

Grymbert sawe his maner and sayde / fowle false deceyuour / how goo your eyen so after the poleyl /

The foxe sayde / cosyn ye mysdoo to saye to me ony suche wordes / ye brynge me out of my deuocion and prayers / late me saye apater noster ffore alle the sowles of polaylle and ghes that I haue betrayed / and ofte wyth falsheed stolen from thyse holly nonnes /

Grymbert was not wel a payd but the foxe had euer his eyen toward the polayl / til atte laste they cam in the waye agayn. And thenne torned they to the courte warde / how sore quaked tho reynard whan they aproched the court / ffor he wiste wel that he had for to answere to many afowle feet and theft that he had doon /

How the foxe cam to the court / and how he excused hym to fore the kynge / capitulo .xiij°

AT the first whan it was knowen / in the court that reynart the foxe and grymbaert his cosyn were comen to the court / Ther was none so poure nor so feble of kynne and frendes / but that he made hym redy for to complayne on reynart the foxe /

reynart loked as he had not ben aferd / and helde hym better / than he was for he wente forth proudly with his neueu thurgh the hyest street of the courte / right as he had ben the kynges sone and as he had not trespaced to ony man the value of an heer / and wente in the mydel of the place stondyng to fore noble the kynge and sayde / God gyue yow grete honour and worship / Ther was neuer kyng / that euer had a trewer seruant / than I haue ben to your good grace and yet am· Neuertheles dere lorde I knowe wel that ther ben many in this courte that wolde destroye me yf yewold byleue them / but nay god thanke yow /

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hit is not fyttyng to youre crowne to byleue thise false deceyuars and lyars lyghtly / To god mote it be complayned / how that thise false lyars and flaterers now adayes in the lordes courtes ben moste herde and byleuyd / the shrewes and false deceyuers ben borne vp for to doo to good men alle the harme and scath they maye / Our lorde god shal ones rewarde them their hyre /

the kynge sayde / pees reynard false theef and traytour / how wel can ye brynge forth fayr talis / And alle shalle not helpe yow a strawe / wene ye wyth suche flateryng wordes to be my frende / ye haue so ofte seruyd me soo as ye now shal wel knowe / The pees that I haue comanded and sworn / that haue ye wel holden / haue ye /

chauntecler coude no lenger be stylle but cryde alas what haue / I by this pees loste /

be stylle chaunteclere holde your mouth late me answere this fowle theef /

How shrewd felle theef saide the kynge / thou saist that thow louest me wel· that hast thou shewd wel on my messagers these poure felaws / Tibert the cat and bruyn the bere / whiche yet ben al blody whiche chyde not ne saye not moche / but that shal this day coste the[e] thy lyf / In nomine pater· criste. filij.

sayd the foxe dere lord and myghty kyng· yf bruyns crowne be blody / what is that to me / when he ete hony at lantferts hows in the vyllage and dyde hym hurte and scathe / there was he beten therfore yf he had willyd he is so stronge of lymmes / he myght wel haue be auengid er he sprang in to the water / Tho cam tybert the catte whom I receyued frendly / yf he wente out without my counseyl for to stele myes to a prestes hows / and the preest dyde hym harme sholde I aby[d]e that thenne myght I saye I were not happy / not so my liege lorde / ye may doo what ye wille / thowh my mater be cleer and good. ye may siede me / or roste / hange. or make me blynde. I may not escape yow. we stonde alle vnder your correccion. ye be myghty and stronge. I am feble / and my helpe is but smal / yf ye put me to the deth. hit were a smal vengeance /

whiles they thus spack. sprange vp bellyn the rame and his ewe dame olewey and saide my lord the kynge

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here oure complaynt / bruyn the bere stode vp wyth al his lygnage and his felaws. Tibert the catte Isegrym the wulf. kywart the hare / and panther the boore ·the camel and brunel the ghoos the kyde and ghoot / boudewyn the asse. borre the bulle / hamel the oxe· and the wesel. Chantecler the cock. pertelot wyth alle theyr children ·alle thise made grete rumour and noyse. And cam forth openly to fore their lorde the kynge. And made that the foxe was taken and arested /

How the fore was arestid and Juged to deth capitulo ·xiiij·

HEre vpon was a parlament / and they desired that reynart sholde ben deed and what somme euer they sayden ayenst the foxe / he answerde to eche to them / neuer herde man of suche beestis / suche playntis of wyse counseyl / and subtyl Inuencions and on that other syde / the foxe made his excuse so wel and formably theron that they that herde it wondred therof / they that herde and sawe it / may telle hit forth for trouthe / I shal shorte the mater and telle yow forth of the foxe / The kynge and the counseyl herd the witnessis of the complayntes of reynarts mysdedes / hit went with hem as it ofte doth the feblest hath the worst / They gafe sentence and Iudged that the foxe shoulde be dede and hanged by the necke / tho lyfte not he to pleye alle his flateryng wordes / and deceytes coud not helpe hym / The Iugement was gyuen and that muste be don / grymbert his neueu / and many of his lignage myght not fynde in their hertes to see hym dye but token leue soroufully / and romed the court.

The kynge bithoughte hym and marked how many a yonglyng departed from thens al wepyng / whiche were nyghe of his kynne / and sayde to hym self / hier behoueth other counseyl herto / Though reynart be a shrewe / ther be many good of his lignage /

thybert the catte sayde / sir bruyn and sir Isegrym / how be ye thus slowe. it is almost euen / hier ben many busshes and hedges. yf he escaped from vs. and were delyuerd out of this paryl he is so subtyl and so wyly and can so many deceytes

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that he shold neuer be taken agayn / shal we hange hym how stonde ye al thus er the galewis can be made redy it shal be nyght /

Isegrym bethought hym tho and seyde / hier by is a gybet or galewis / And wyth that worde he sighed /

and the catte espyed that and sayde / Isegrym ye be aferd / ys it ayenst your wylle / thynke ye not that he hym self wente. and laboured that bothe your brethern were hanged / were ye good and wyse ye sholde thanke hym / and ye sholde not therwith so longe tarye /

How the fore was ledde to the galewis / capo ·xvo·

Isegrym balked and sayde / ye make moche a doo sir tyberte hadde we an halter which were mete for his necke and strong ynough / we shold sone make an ende /

reynert the foxe whiche longe had not spoken / saide to Isegrym shorte my payne / Tyberte hath a stronge corde whiche caughte hym in the prestes hous / whan he bote of[f] the prestes genytoirs / he can clyme wel and is swyft late hym bere vp / the lyne / Isegrym and bruyn thys becometh yow wel that ye thus doo to your neuew / I am sory that I lyue thus longe / haste you ye be sette therto / it is euyl doo that ye tarye thus longe / goo to fore bruyn and lede me Isegrym folowe fast. and see wel to and be ware that reynart go not away.

tho sayd bruyn it is the best counseil that I euer yet herde / that reynart there seith

Isegrym commanded anon and badde his kyn and frendes. that they sholde see to reynart that he escaped not. ffor he is so wyly and fals. They helden hym by the feet. by the berde. and so kepte hym that he escaped not from hem /

The foxe herde alle thyse wordes / whiche touchid hym nygh / yet spak he and sayde / Och dere eme / me thynketh ye payne your self sore / for to doo me hurte and scathe / yf I durste I wolde pay you of mercy / thaugh my hurte and sorow is playsant to you / I wote wel yf myn aunte your wyf bethought her wel of olde ferners· she wolde not suffre that / I shold haue ony harme / but now I am he / that nowe ye wille doo on

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me what it shal plese yow / ye bruyn and thibert / god gyue you shames deth but ye doo to me your werst / I wote wherto I shal / I may deye but ones I wolde that I were dede al redy I sawe my fader deye he had so[o]ne donne /

Isegrym sayde late vs goo / ffor ye curse vs bi cause we lengthe the tyme / euyl mote he fare yf we abyde ony lenger /

he wente forth wyth grete enuye on that one side and bruyn stoode on the other syde / and so lede they hym forth to the galowes warde / Tybert ranne with a good wil to fore / and bare the corde and his throte was yet sore of the grynne / and his croppe dyde hym woo of the stryke that he was take in that happed by the counseil of the foxe / and that thought he now to quyte /

Tybert ysegrym and bruyn wente hastely wyth reinert to the place / there as the felons ben wonte to be put to deth / Nobel the kynge and the quene / and alle that were in the court folowed after for to see the ende of reynart / the foxe was in grete drede yf hym mys[s]happed / and bethought hym ofte / how he myghte saue hym fro the deth / And tho thre[e] that so sore desireden hys deth how he myght deceyue them / and brynge them to shame / and how he myght brynge the kynge wyth lesyngis ffor to holde wyth hym ayenst hem / This was alle that he studyed / how he myght putte away his sorowe wyth wylys / And thought / thus though the kynge and many one be vpon me angry / it is no wonder for I haue wel deseruid it / neuertheles I hope for to be yet hir best frende / And yet shal I neuer do them good / how strong that the kynge be / and how wyse that his counseil be / yf I may brouke my wordes / I knowe so many an inuencion / I shal come to myn aboue / as fer as they wolde comen to the galewes /

Tho saide ysegrym / sir bruyn thynke now on your rede crowne whiche by reynarts mene ye caughte we haue now the tyme that we may wel rewarde hym / Tybert clyme vp hastyly and bynde the corde faste to the lynde / and make a rydynge knotte or a strope / ye be the lyghtyst / ye shal this day see your wylle of hym· Bruyn see wel to that he escape not. and holde faste. I will helpe that the ladder be sette vp / that he may goo vpwart theron.

bruyn said. do. I shal helpe hym wel

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The foxe sayde now may my herte be wel heuy for grete drede· ffor I see the deth to fore myn eyen. and I may not escape· my lorde the kynge and dere quene and forth alle ye that here stande. er I departe fro this worlde I pray you of a bo[o]ne. that I may to fore you alle make my confession openly and telle my defaultes also clerly that my sowle be not a-combred / and also that noman here after / bere no blame for my thefte ne for my treson my deth shal be to me the esyer / and praye ye alle to god that he haue mercy on my sowle.

How the fore made openly his confession to fore the kynge and to fore al them that wold here it cap° xvj°

Alle they that stoden there had pyte whan reynart saide tho wordis and said it was / but a lytyl requeste yf the kynge wolde graunte it hym / and they prayde the kynge to graunte it hym /

The kynge gaf hym leue /

reynart was wel glad and hoped that it myght falle better / And said thus / now helpe spiritus domini / for I see hier noman but I haue trespaced vnto / Neuertheles yet was I vnto the tyme that I was wened fro the tete / one the best chylde that coude ouwher be founden / I wente tho and pleyde wyth the lambes by cause I herde hem gladly blete / I was so longe wyth hem that at the laste I bote one / there lerned I fyrst to lapen of the bloode hit sauourd wel / me thought it right good And after I began to taste of the flessh / therof I was lycourous / so that after that I wente to the gheet in to the wode / there herde I the kyddes blete and I slewe of them tweyne / I began to wexe hardy after I slew hennes / polayl and ghees / where euer I fonde hem. Thus worden my teeth al blody after this I wexe so felle and so wroth / That what somme euer I founde that I myght ouer / I slowe alle / Ther aftercam I by Isegrym now in the wynter / where he hydde hym vnder a tree. And rekened to me that / he was myn eme whenne I herde hym thenne rekene allyance we becomen felaws whiche I may wel repente / we promysed eche to other

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to be trewe and to vse good felawship / and began to wandre to gyder / he stal the grete thynges and I the smalle and all was comyn bytwene vs / yet he made it so that he had the beste dele I gate not halfe my parte / whan that ysegrym gate a calf / a ramme or a weder thenne grimmed he / and was angry on me and droof me fro hym / and helde my part and his to[o] / so good is he.

YEt this was of the leste / but whan it so lucked that we toke an oxe or a cowe / thenne cam therto his wyf wyth. vij. children so / that vnto me myght vnnethe come one of the smallest rybbes / and yet had they eten alle the flessh therof / ther with all muste I be content not for that I had so grete nede. ffor I haue so grette scatte and good of syluer and of gold that seuen waynes shold not conne carye it away /

whan the kynge herde hym speke of this grete good and richesse he brenned in the desyre and couetyse therof and sayde reynart where is the rychesse becomen / telle me that·

the foxe saide my lord I shal telle yow / the rychesse was stolen / and had it not bestolen / it shold haue cost yow / your lyf and [you] shold haue ben murdred whiche god forbede and shold haue ben the gretest hurte of the worlde /

whan the quene herde that she was sore aferde and cryde lowde / alas and weleaway reynart what say ye / I coniure yow by the longe waye that youre soule shal goo / that ye telle vs openly the trouthe herof as moche as ye knowe of this grete murdre that sholde haue be doon on my lorde / that we alle may here it

now herkene how the foxe shal flatre the kynge and quene / and shal wynne bothe their good willes and loues And shal hyndre them that laboure for his deth / he shal vnbynde his packe and lye and by flaterye and fayr wordes shal brynge forth so his maters / that it shal be supposed for trouthe /

IN a sorouful contenance spack the foxe to the quene I am in suche caas now that I muste nedes deye / and hadde ye me not so sore coniured / I wil not Ieoparde my sowle / and yf I so dyde I shold goo therfore in to the payne of helle / I wil saye nothyng but that I wil make it good / for pytously he shold haue ben murthred of his owen folke. neuertheles they that were most pryncypal in this feat. were

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of my next kynne· whom gladly I wold not bewraye. yf the sorow were not of the helle.

The kynge was heuy of herte and saide / reynart saiste thou to me the trouthe.

ye said the foxe. see ye not how it standeth with me. wene ye that I wil dampne my sowle. what shold it auaylle me yf I now saide other wise than trouthe. my deth is so nyghe· ther may nether prayer ne good helpe me Tho trembled the foxe by dyssymlyyng as he had ben a ferde

The quene had pyte on hym. And prayde the kyng to haue mercy on hym in eschewyng of more harme / and that he sholde doo the peple holde their peas and gyue the foxe Audience. and here what he shold saye /

Tho commanded the kynge openly that eche of them shold be stylle / and suffre the foxe to saye vnberisped what that he wolde.

thenne saide the foxe / be ye now alle stylle. syth it is the kynges wille. and I shal telle you openly this treson. And therin I wil spare noman that I knowe gylty.

How the foxe brought them in daunger / that wolde haue brought hym to deth. and how he gate the grace of the kyng. capitulo .xviij°:

NOw herkene how the foxe began. in the begynnyng he appeled grymbert his dere cosyn. whiche euer had holpen hym in his nede / he dyde so bycause his wordes sholde be the better byleued. and that he forthon myght the better lye on his enemyes / thus began he firste and saide.

my lorde my fader had founden kyng ermeryks tresour doluen in a pytte. and whan he had thys grete good. he was so prowde and orguillous that he had alle other beestis in despyte whiche to fore had been his felaws he made tybert the catte to goo in to that wylde lande of ardenne to bruyn the bere for to do to hym homage. and bad hym saye yf he wolde be kynge that he shold come in to flaundres / bruyn the bere was glad hierof / ffor he had longe desired it / And wente forth in to flaundres where my fader receyued hym right frendly / anone

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he sente for the wyse grymbert myn neuewe / And for ysegrym the wulfe / and for tybert the catte / Tho these fyue camen bytwene gaunt and the thorpe callyd yfte / there they helden their counseyl an hole derke nyght longe / what wyth the deuels helpe and craft and for my faders richesse they concluded / and swore there the kyngys deth / now herkene and here this wonder the foure sworen vpon ysegryms crowne / that they sholde make bruyn a kynge and a lorde / And brynge hym in the stole at akon and sette the crowne on his heed / and yf there were ony of the kynges frendes or lignage / that wolde be contrarye or ayenst this / hym sholde my fader wyth his good and tresour fordryue and take from hym his myght and power /

IT happed so that on a morowtyde erly that grymbert my neuew was of wyne almost dronke / that he tolde it to dame sloepcade his wif in counseyl / and badde her kepe it secrete / but she anone forgate it / and saide it forth in confession to my wyf / vpon and heth where they bothe wenten a pylgremage / but she muste firste swere by her trouthe and by the holy thre kynges of coleyne that for loue ne for hate she sholde neuer telle it forth but kepe it secrete but she helde it not / and kepte it no lenger secrete but tyl she cam to me / and she thenne tolde to me alle that she herde / but I muste kepe it in secrete / and she tolde me so many tokenys / that I felte wel it was trouthe and for drede and fere myn heer stode right vp / and my herte becam as heuy as leed / and as colde as Ise / I thought by this a lyknesse whiche hier a fore tyme byfylle to the frosshis / whiche were free / and complayned that they had none lorde / ne were not bydwongen / for a comynte without a gouuernour was not go[o]d / and they cryden to god with a lowde voys / that he wolde ordeyne one that myght rewle them / this was al that they desired / god herde theyr requeste / for it was resonable and sente to them a storke / whiche ete and swolowed them in as many as he coude fynde / he was alway to hem vnmercyful / tho complayned they theyr hurte / but thenne it was to[o] late / they that were to fore free and were a ferde of no body / ben now bonde and muste obeye to strengthe theyr kynge / hyer fore ye riche and poure I sorowed that it myght happen vs in lyke wyse /

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THus my lord the kyng I haue had sorowe for yow wherof ye can me but lytyl thanke / I knowe bruyn the bere for suche a shrewe and rauener / wherfor I thoughte yf he were kynge we shold be alle destroyed and loste / I knowe our souerain lord the kyng of so hye byrthe / so myghty so benyngne and mercyful / that I thought truly it had ben an euyl chaunge for to haue a foule stynkngye theef and to refuse a noble myghty stately lyon / ffor the bere hath more madde folye in his vnthrifty heed and al his auncestris / than ony other hath / thus had I in myn herte many a sorowe / and thought alway how I myght breke and fordoo my faders fals counseyl whiche of a chorle and a traytour and worse than a theef wolde make a lorde and a kynge / alway I prayd god that he wolde kepe our kyng in worship and good helthe and graunte hym long lyf / but I thought wel yf my fader helde his tresour / he shold with his fals felaws wel fynde the waye that the kyng shold be deposed and sette a syde / I was sore bethought how I myght beste wyte where my faders good laye / I a wayted at al tymes as nygh as I coude / in wodes in bushes in feeldis / where my fader leyde his eyen / were it by nyghte or by daye / colde or weet I was alway by hym to espye and knowe where his tresour was leyde /

ON a tyme I laye down al plat on the grounde / and sawe my fader come rennyng out of an hole / Nowe herke what I sawe hym doo / whan he cam out of the hole / he loked fast a boute yf ony body had seen hym / And whan he coude nowher none see / he stopped the hole with sande and made hit euen and playn lyke to the other grounde by / he knewe not that I sawe it / and where his footspore stood / there stryked he with his tayl and made it smothe with his mouth that noman shold espye it / that lerned I there of my fals fadre and many subtylitees that I to fore knewe nothyng of / thenne departed he thens and ran to the village warde for to doo his thyngis / and I forgate not but sprange and lepe to the hole ward / and how wel that he had supposed that he had made al faste I was not so moche a fool but that I fonde the hole wel / and cratched and scraped with my feet the sande out of the hole / and crepte therin / there fonde I the moste

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plente of siluer and of golde that euer I sawe / hier is none so olde that euer so moche sawe on one heep in alle his lyf / Tho toke I ermelyne my wyf to helpe / and we ne rested nyght ne day to bere and carye a waye with grete labour and payne this riche tresour in to another place that laye for vs better vnder an hawe in a depe hole / in the mene whyle that myn husewyf and I thus labouryd my fader was with them that wolde betraye the kynge / now may ye here what they dede / bruyn the bere and ysegrym the wulf sente alle the londe a boute / yf ony man wolde take wages / that they shold come to bruyn / and he wolde paye them their souldye or wagis to fore. my fader ranne alle ouer the londe and bare the lettres. he wist lytil that he was robbed of his tresour. ye[a] though he myght haue wonnen al the world. he had not conne fynde a peny therof.

When my fader hadde ben oueral in the lande bytwene the elue and the somme. And hadde goten many a souldyour that shold the next somer haue comen to helpe bruyn. tho cam he agayn to the bere and his felowis. and tolde them in how grete a venture he had be to fore the borughes in the londe of saxone / and how the hunters dayly ryden and hunted with houndes after hym in suche wise that he vnnethis escaped with his lyf / whan he had tolde this to thise foure false traytours / thenne shewde he them lettres that plesyd moche to bruyn there in were wreton xij· C· [1200] of ysegryms lignage by name withoute the beres / the foxes / the cattes and the dassen / alle thise had sworn that wyth the first messager that shold come for them they shold be redy and come for to helpe the bere / yf they had their wages a moneth to fore / This aspyed I / I thanke god / after thise wordes my fader wente to the hole where his tresour had leyn and wolde loke vpon it / tho began he a grete sorowe / that he soughte he fonde nothyng / he fonde his hole broken and his tresour born away / there dede he that I may wel sorowe and bewaylle / for grete anger and sorowe he wente and hynge hym self / thus abode the treson of bruyn by my subtylte after / Now see myn Infortune / thise traytours ysegrym and bruyn / ben now most preuy of counseyl aboute the kynge / and sytte by hym on the hye bouche / And I poure reynart haue no thanke ne reward / I haue buryed myn owen fader by cause the kynge sholde

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haue his lyf / my lorde saide the foxe / where ben they that so wolde doo / that is to destroye them self for to kepe yow /

The kynge and the queene hoped to wynne the tresour and wyth oute counceyl toke to them reynart and prayde hym that he wold do so wel as to telle them were this tresour was /

reynart saide how shold I telle the kynge or them that wolde hange me / for loue of the traytours and murderars whiche by her flaterye wolde fayne brynge me to deth / shold I telle to them where my good is / thenne were I out of my wytte /

The quene tho spak nay reynart the kynge shal lete you haue your lyf / and shal al to gydre forgyue you / and ye shal be frohens forth wyse and true to my lorde.

the foxe answerd to the quene. dere lady yf the kynge wil beleue me and that he wil pardone and forgyue me alle my olde trespaces ther was neuer kynge so riche as I shal make hym for the tresour that I shal doo hym haue / is right costely and may not be nombred /

The kynge saide ach dame. wille ye beleue the foxe. sauf your reuerence he is borne to robbe / stele and to lye / this cleuid to his bones and can not be had out of the flessh /

the quene saide / nay my lorde ye may now well byleue hym / though he were to fore felle / he is now chaunged otherwise than he was ye haue wel herde that he hath appechid his fader and the dasse his neuew / whiche he might wel haue leyde on other bestes / yf he wold haue ben false / felle / and a lyar /

The kynge saide dame wille ye thenne haue it soo / and thynke ye it best to be don / though I supposed it sholde hurte me / I wille take alle thise trespaces of reynart vpon me / and bileue his wordes / But I swere by my crowne / yf he euer here after mysdoo and trespace / that shal he dere aby[d]e and alle his lignage vnto the. ix. degree /

The foxe loked on the kyng stoundmele and was glad in his herte / and saide my lorde / I were not wyse / yf I sholde saye thynge that were not trewe

The kynge toke vp a straw fro the ground / And pardoned and forgaf the foxe alle the mysdedes and trespaces of his fader and of hym also /

yf the foxe was tho mery and glad it was no wonder / ffor

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he was quyte of his deth and was alle free and franke of alle his enemyes/

THe foxe saide my lord the kynge and noble lady the quene god rewarde yow/thys grete worship that ye do to me/I shal thynke and also thanke you for hit/in suche wise that ye shal be the richest kynge of the world/ffor ther is none lyuyng vnther the sonne/that I vouchesauf better my tresour on/than on yow bothe/

Thenne toke the foxe vp a straw and profred it to the kyng/ and saide my moste dere lord plese it yow to receyue hiere the ryche tresour whiche kynge ermeryk hadde/for I gyue it vnto you wyth a fre wylle/and knowleche it openly/

The kynge receyuid the straw and threwe it meryly fro hym with a Ioyous visage/And thanked moche the foxe/

The foxe laughed in hym self.

The kynge thenne herkened after the counseyl of the foxe. And alle that ther were/were at his wylle/

My lorde sade he/herkene and marke wel my wordes/in the west side of flaundres ther standeth a woode and is named hulsterlo/And a water that is called krekenpyt lyeth therby/This is so grete a wyldernesse/that ofte in an hole yere man ner wyf cometh therin/sauf they that wil/and they that wille not eschewe it/There lyeth this tresour hydde/vnderstande wel that the place is called krekenpit/for I aduyse you for the leste hurte/that ye and my lady goo bothe thyder/ffor I knowe none so trewe that I durste on your behalue truste wherfore goo your self/And whan ye come to krekenpyt ye shal fynde there two birchen trees standyng alther next the pytte/my lorde to tho byrchen trees shal ye goo/there lyeth the tresour vnther doluen/ There muste ye scrape and dygge a way a lytyl the mosse on the one side/Ther shalle ye fynde many a Iewel of golde and syluer. and there shal ye fynde the crowne whiche kynge Ermeryk ware in his dayes that sholde bruyn the bere haue worn yf his wyl had gon forth ye shal see many a costly Iewel with riche stones sette in golde werk whiche coste many a thousand marke/My lorde the kynge whan ye now haue alle this good/how ofte shal ye saye in your herte and thynke/O how true art thou reynart the foxe. that with thy subtyl wytte daluyst and hyddest here this grete tresour/god gyue the[e] good happe and welfare where euer thou bee/

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THe kynge sayde / sir reynart ye muste come and helpe vs to dygge vp this tresour / I knowe / not the way / I sholde neuer conne fynde it / I haue herde ofte named / parys / london akon and coleyn / As me thynketh this tresour lyeth / right as ye mocked and Iaped / for ye name kryekenpyt / that is afayned name /

these wordes were not good to the foxe / and he sayd wyth an angry mode / and dissymyled and saide / ye my lord the kynge / ye be also nyghe that as fro rome to maye / wene ye that I wille lede yow to flomme iordyn· / Nay I shal brynge you out of wenyng and shewe it you by good wytnes /

he called lowde kywart the hare / come here to fore the kynge The bestes sawe alle thyder ward and wondred what the kynge wold / the foxe sayde to the hare / kywart ar ye a colde / how tremble ye and quake so / be not a ferd / and telle my lorde the kynge here the trouthe / And that I charge you by the fayth and trouthe that ye owe hym and to my lady the quene of suche thyng. as I shal demaunde of you /

Kywaert saide I shal saye the trouthe though I shold lose my necke therfore / I shal not lye ye haue charged me so sore / yf I knowe it /

Thenne saye / knowe ye not where krieken pyt standeth / is that in your mynde /

the hare saide / I knewe that wel. xij. yer a goon / wher that stondeth / why aske ye that. It stondeth in awoode named hulsterlo vpon a warande in the wyldernesse / I haue suffred there moche sorowe for hunger and for colde / ye[a] more than I can telle / Pater symonet the friese was woned to make there false money / wherwyth he bare hym self out and al his felawship / but that was to fore er I had felawship wyth ryn the hounde / whyche made me escape many a daunger / as he coude wel telle yf he were here / and that I neuer In my dayes trespaced ayenst the kynge other wyse than I oughte to doo with right /

reynart sayd to hym go agayn to yonder felawship here ye kyward / my lorde the kynge desyreth nomore to knowe of yow /

the hare retorned and wente agayn to the place he cam fro.

The foxe sayde my lord the kynge is it trewe that I saide /

ye reynart said the kynge / ffor gyue it me / I dyde euyl

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that I beleuid you not / Now reynart frende fynde the waye that ye goo wyth vs to the place and pytte / where the tresour lyeth /

the foxe saide it is a wonder thyng wene ye that I wolde not fayne goo with yow / yf it were so wyth me that I myght goo wyth yow / in suche wise that it no shame were vnto your lordshyp / I wold goo but nay it may not bee / herkene what I shal saye and muste nedes thaugh it be to me vylonye and shame / whan Isegrym the wulf in the deuels name wente in to religion and become a monke shorn in the ordre / tho the prouende of sixe monkes was not suffycient to hym / and had not ynough to ete he thenne playned and waylled so sore / that I had pyte on hym / for he becam slowe and seke / and by cause he was of my kynne I gaf hym counceyl to renne away and so he dyde / wherfore I stonde a cursed and am in the popes banne and sentence I wil to morow bytymes as the sonne riseth take my waye to rome for to be assoyled and take pardon and fro rome I wil ouer the see in to the holy lande and wil neuer retorne agayn til I haue doon so moche good that I may with worship goo wyth yow / hyt were grete repref to you my lord the kyng / in what londe that I accompanyed you that men shold saye ye reysed and accompanyed your self with a cursyd and persone agrauate /

The kynge sayde sith that ye stande a cursyd in the censures of the chirche yf I wente wyth yow / men sholde arette vilonye vnto my crowne / I shal thenne take kywaert or somme other to goo with me to kryekenpytte / and I counseylle you reynart that ye put you your self out of this curse /

my lord quod the foxe / therfore wylle I goo to rome as hastely as I may / I shall not reste by nyght ner day til I bee assoylled /

reynart said the kynge / me thynketh ye ben torned in to a good waye / god gyue you grace t[o]accomplyssh wel your desyre /

Assone as this spekyng was don / noble the kyng wente and stode vpon an hygh stage of stone / And commanded sylence to alle the bestes / and that they shulde sytte doun in a rynge rounde vpon the grasse eueriche in his place after his estate and byrthe / reynart the foxe stode by the quene / whom he ought wel to loue /

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Thenne said the kynge / here ye alle that be poure and riche yong and olde that stondeth here / reynart one of the heed offycers of my hows had don so euyl whiche this daye shold haue ben hanged / hath now in this courte don so moche / that I and my wyf the quene haue promysed to hym our grace and frendshyp / The quene hath prayde moche / for hym / in so moche that I haue made pees wyth hym / And I gyue to hym his lyf and membre / frely agayn / and I comande you vpon your lyf / that ye doo worship to / reynart his wyf and to his chyldren / where someuer ye mete hem by day or night / and I wil also here nomoo complayntes of reynard / yf he hath hier to fore mysdon and trespaced / he wil nomore mysdo ne trespace / but now bettre hym / he wylle to morowe / erly goo to the pope for pardone and foryeuenes of alle hys synnes and forth ouer the see to the holy lande / and he wil not come agayn til he brynge pardon of alle his synnes /

This tale herde tyselyn the rauen / and leep to ysegrym / to bruyn / and to tybert there as they were / and saide ye caytyfs / how go[e]th it now / ye vnhappy folke what do ye here / reynard the foxe is now asquyer and a courtyer and right grete and myghty in the court / The kynge hath skylled hym quyte of alle his brokes and forgyuen hym all his trespaces and mysdedes / And ye be alle betrayed and apechyd /

ysegrym saide how may this be / I trowe tyselyn that ye lye I do not certaynly saide the rauen /

Tho wente the wulf and the bere to the kynge Tybert the catte was in grete sorowe he was so sore a ferde / that for to haue the foxes frendship / he wold wel forgyue reyner the losse of his one eye that he loste in the prestes hows / he was so woo / he wist not what to doo / he wolde wel that he neuer had seen the foxe /

How the wulf and the bere were arestyd by the labour of reynart the fore capitulo .xviij°.

YSegrym cam proudly ouer the felde to fore the kynge / and he thanked the quene / and spack wyth afelle moed ylle wordes on the foxe / in suche wise that the kynge herde it / and was wroth and made the wulf and the bere anon to be arestyd / ye sawe neuer wood

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dogges do / more harme / than was don to them they were bothe fast bounden so sore that alle that nyght / they myght not stere hande ne foot / They myght scarsely rore ne meue ony Ioynte / Now here how the foxe forth dyde / he hated hem / he laboured so to the quene that he gate leue for to haue as moche of the beres skyn vpon his ridge as a foote longe and a foot brode for to make hym therof a scryppe / thenne was the foxe redy yf he had foure stronge shoon / now here how he dyde for to gete these shoon /

he said to the quene / madame I am youre pylgrym / here is myn eme sir Isegrym that hath .iiij. stronge shoon whiche were good for me / yf he wolde late me haue two of them I wolde on the waye besyly thynke on your sowle / ffor it is ryght that a pylgrym shold alway thynke and praye for them that doo him good / Thus maye ye doo your sowle good yf ye will. And also yf ye myght gete of myn aunte dame eerswyn also two of her shoon to gyue me / she may wel doo it / ffor she gooth but lytil out / but abydeth alway at home /

thenne sayde the quene / reynard yow behoueth wel suche shoes / ye may not be wythout them / they shal be good for you to kepe your feet hool for to passe with them many a sharpe montayn and stony roches / ye can fynde no better shoes for you / than suche as Isegrym and his wyf haue and were / they be good and stronge / though it sholde touche their lyf eche of them shal gyue you two shoes for to accomplissh wyth your hye pilgremage /

How ysegrym and his wyf ereswyn muste suffre her shois to be plucked of / And how reynard dyde on the shoys for to goo to rome wyth / capitulo ·xix°.

THus hath this false pylgrym goten fro Isegrym ij shooes fro his feet / whiche were haled of the clawes to the senewis ye sawe neuer foule that men rosted laye so stylle / as Isegrym dyde / whan his shoes were haled of / he styred not / and yet his feet bledde / thenne whan Isegrym was vnshoed / Tho muste dame eerswyn his wyf lye doun in the grasse wyth an heuy chere / And she loste ther her hynder shoes /

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Tho was the foxe glad and saide to his aunte in scorne / My dere aunte how moche sorow haue ye suffred for my sake/ whiche me sore repenteth / sauf this / herof I am glad ffor ye be the lyeuest of alle my kyn / Therefore I wyl gladly were your shoen / ye shal be partener of my pylgremage / and dele of the pardon that I shal with your shoen fecche ouer the see/

dame erswyne was so woo that she vnnethe myghte speke/ Neuertheles this she saide / A[h] reynart that ye now al thus haue your wyl / I pray god to wreke it /

ysegrym and his felaw the bere helden their pees and wheren al stylle / they were euyl at ease / ffor they were / bounden and sore wounded had tybert the catte haue ben there / he shold also somwhat haue suffred / in suche wyse / as he sholde not [haue] escaped thens wythout hurte and shame·

THe next day whan the sonne aroos reynard thenne dyde grece his shoes whiche he had of ysegrym and erswyn his wyf / and dyd hem on and bonde hem to his feet / and wente to the kynge and to the quene and said to hem with a glad chere / Noble lord and lady god gyue you good morow and I desire of your grace that I may haue male and staff blessyd as belongeth to a pilgrym

Thenne the kynge anone / sent for bellyn the ramme / and whan he cam he saide / sir bellyn ye shal do masse to fore reynart / for he shal goo on pylgrymage / and gyue to hym male and staf /

the ram answerd agayn and said / my lord I dare not do that / ffor he hath said that he is in the popes curse /

The kynge said / what therof / mayster gelys hath said to vs / yf a man had doo as many synnes as al the world / and he wold tho synnes forsake / shryue hem and resseyue penance/ and do by the prestes counseyl / god wil forgyue them and be mercyful vnto hym now wil reynard goo ouer the see in to the holy lande and make hym clere of al his synnes /

Thenne ansuerd bellyn to the kynge I wil not doo litil ne moche herin / but yf ye saue me harmles in the spirituel court byfore the bysshop prendelor and to fore his archedeken loosuynde / and to for sir rapiamus his offycyal /

The kynge began to wexe wroth and saide / I shal not bydde you so moche in half a yere / I had leuer hange yow than I shold so moche praye you for it /

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whan the rame sawe that the kynge was angry / he was so sore aferd that he quoke for fere / and wente to the awter and sange in his bookes and radde suche as hym thought good ouer reynart / whiche lytyl sette ther by / sauf that he wold haue the worship therof

Whan bellyn the ramme had alle sayd his seruyse deuoutly / thenne he hynge on the foxes necke / a male couerd wyth the skynne of bruyn the bere / and a lytil palster therby. tho was reynart redy toward his Iourney. tho loked he toward the kynge as he had ben sorowful to departe and fayned as he had wepte. right as he hadde yamerde in his herte· but yf he had ony sorow it was bycause al the other that were there were not in the same plyght as the wulf and bere were brought in by hym. neuertheles he stood and prayd them alle to praye for hym. lyke as he wold praye for them the foxe thought that he taryed longe and wold fayn haue departed for he knewe hym self gylty /

the kynge saide reynart I am sory ye be so hasty / and wil no lenger tarye /

nay my lord / it is tyme / for me ought not spare to doo wel / I pray you to gyue me leue to departe I muste doo my pylgremage /

the kynge sayd / god be wyth yow / and commanded alle them of the court to go and conueyne reynart on his way sauf the wulf and the bere / whyche fast laye bounden / ther was none that durst be sory therfore / and yf ye had seen reynart how personably he wente wyth hys male and palster on his sholder and the shoes on his feet / ye shold haue laughed / he wente and shewde hym outeward wysely / But he laughed in his herte that alle they brought hym forth / whiche had a lytyl to fore been with. hym so wrooth / And also the kynge whiche so moche hated hym / he had made hym suche a fool that he brought hym to his owne entente he was a pylgrym of deux aas.

My lord the kyng sayd the foxe I pray you to retorne agayn I wil not that ye goo ony ferther with me. ye myght haue harme therby. ye haue there two morderars arestyd / yf they escape you. ye myght be hurt by them y pray god kepe you fro mysauenture· wyth these wordes he

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stode vp. on his afterfeet. And prayde alle the beestys grete and smal that wolde be parteners of his pardon that they shold praye for hym/

They sayde that they alle wolde remembre hym/

Thenne departed he fro the kynge so heuyly that many of them ermed/

Thenne said he to kyward the hare/and to bellyn th[e] ramme meryly/dere frendes shal we now departe/Ye wil and god will accompanye me ferther/ye two made me neuer angry/ye be good for to walke wyth/courtoys/ frendly and not complayned on of ony beeste ye be of good condicions/and goostly of your lyuyng/ye lyue bothe as I dyde/whan I was a recluse/yf ye haue leeuis and gras[s] ye be plesyd/ye retche not of brede/of flesshe/ne suche maner mete

with suche flateryng wordes hath reynard thise two flatred/That they wente wyth hym tyl they camen to fore his hows/maleperduys/

How kywart the hare was slayn by the fore/capo .xxo

THan the foxe was come to fore the yate of his hows he sayde to bellyn the ramme/cosyn ye shal abide here withoute/I and kywart wille goo in/ffor I wille praye kywart to helpe me to take my leue of ermelyn my wyf/and to conforte her and my chyldren/

bellyn sayde I praye hym to comforte them wel/

wyth suche flateryng wordes brought he the hare in to his hole in an euyl hour/There fonde they dame ermelyn lyeng on the grounde with her yonglyngis/whiche had sorowed moche ffor drede of reynarts deth/but whan she sawe hym come she was glad/but whan she sawe his male and palster/ and espyed his shoes/she meruailled and sayd dere reynerd how haue ye spedd/

he sayd I was arestid in the court/But the kynge let me gon/I muste goo a pilgremage/Bruyn the bere and ysegrym thew ulf they be plegge for me. I thanke the kynge/he hath gyuen to vs kywart hier/ffor to doo with hym what we wyl/ The kynge saide hym self that kywart was the first that on vs complayned/And by the fayth that I owe yow I am right wroth on kywart/

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whan kywart herde thise wordes he was sore aferde / He wold haue fledde / but he myght not / ffor the foxe stode bytwene hym and the yate / And he caught hym by the necke / Tho cryed the hare helpe bellyn helpe / Where be ye This pilgryme sleeth me / but that crye was sone doon / for the foxe had anon byten his throte a two /

Tho sayd he late vs go ete this good fatte hare / the yonge whelpes cam also / Thus helde they a great feste / ffor kywart had a good fatte body / ermelyn ete the flessh and dranke the blood / she thanked ofte the kynge that he had made them so mery / The foxe saide ete as moche as ye maye / he wil paye for it / yf we will feche it.

SHe sayd reynart I trowe ye mocke / telle me the trouthe how ye be departed thens /

dame I haue so flaterid the kynge and the quene / that I suppose the frendship bytwene vs shal be right thynne whan he shal knowe of this / he shal be angry / and hastely seke me for to hange me by myne necke / Therfore late vs departe and stele secretly a way in somme other foreste / Where we may lyue wythoute fere and drede / and there that we may lyue vij yere and more and [they] fynde vs not / there is plente of good mete of partrychs / wododekkis and moche other wilde fowle / dame and yf ye wil come with me thyder / ther ben swete welles and fayr and clere rennyng brokes / lord god how swete eyer is there / There may we be in pees and ease and lyue in grete welthe / ffor the kynge hath lete me gon by cause I tolde hym that ther was grete tresour in krekenpyt / but there shal he fynde nothyng though he sought euer / This shal sore angre hym whan he knoweth that he is thus deceyuid what trowe ye how many a grete lesynge muste I lye / er I coude escape from hym / It was harde that I escaped out of pryson / I was neuer in gretter paryl ne nerrer my deth / but how it euer goo / I shal by my wille neuer more come in the kynges daunger / I haue now goten my thombe out of his mouth / that thanke I my subtylyte.

DAme ermelyne saide reynart I counseyle that we goo not n to another foreste / where we sholde be strange and :lenge we haue here al that we desyre / And ye be here

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lorde of our neyghbours / wherfore shalle we leue this place / And auenture vs in a worse / we may abyde her sure ynough / yf the kynge wold doo vs ony harme or besiege vs / here ben so many by or side holes / in suche wyse as we shal escape from hym / in abydyng here / we may not doo amys / we knowe alle bypathes ouer alle / and er he take vs with myght / he muste haue moche helpe therto but that ye haue sworen that ye shal goo ouersee and abide there / that is the thyng that toucheth me moste.

nay dame care not therfore / how more for sworn / how more forlorn / I wente ones with a good man / that said to me / that a bydwongen oth· or oth sworn for force. was none oth. Though I wente on his pilgremage it shold not auaylle me a cattes tayl. I wil abyde here and folowe your counseyl / yf the kyng hunte after me. I shal kepe me as wel as I maye. yf he be me to[o] myghty. yet I hope wyth subtylte to begyle hym. I shal vnbynde my sack. yf he wil seche harm he shal fynde harme.

NOw was bellyn the ramme angry that kywart his felawe was so longe in the hole / and called lowde. come out kywarte in the deuels name. how longe shal reynart kepe you there / haste you and come late vs goo /

whan reynard herde this· he wente out and saide softly to bellyn the ramme. lief bellyn wherfore be ye angry kywart speketh wyth his dere aunte. me thynketh ye ought not to be dysplesid therfore. he bad me saye to yow ye myght wel go to fore· And he shal come after· he is lighter of fote than ye. he muste tarye a whyle wyth his aunte and her chyldren. they wepe and crye by cause I shal goo fro them /

bellyn sayde· what dyde kyward. me thoughte he cryed after helpe /

the foxe answerd / what saye ye bellyne wene ye that he shold haue ony harme / now herke what he thenne dyde / whan we were comen in to myn hows / and ermelyn my wyf vnderstode that I shold goo ouer see she fyl doun in a swoun and whan kywart sawe that / he cryed loude bellyn come helpe myn aunte to brynge her out of her swoun

thenne sayde the ramme In fayth I vnderstode that kywart had ben in grete daunger /

the foxe sayde / nay truly / or kyward shold haue ony harme in

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my hows / I had leuer that my wyf and chyldren shold suffre moche hurte /

How the foxe sente the heed of kywart the hare to the kynge by bellyn the ramme· capitulo xxj°.

THe foxe saide / bellyn remembre ye not that yesterday the kynge and his counseyl commanded me that er I shold departe out of this lande / I shold sende to hym two lettres. dere cosyn I pray you to bere them. they be redy wreton.

the ramme sayde I wote neuer yf I wiste that your endyttyng and wrytyng were good / ye myght pareuenture so moche praye me that I wold bere them / yf I had ony thyng to bere them in /

reynard saide ye shal not fayle to haue som what to bere them in / rather than they shold be vnborn I shal rather gyue yow my male that I bere. and put the kynges lettres therin. and hange them aboute your necke ye shal haue of the kynge grete thanke therfore and be ryght welcomen to hym.

hier vpon bellyn promysed hym to bere thise lettres·

tho retorned reynart in to his hows and toke the male and put therin kywarts heed and brought it to bellyn for to brynge hym in daunger / And henge it on his necke / and chargyd hym not for to loke in the male / yf he wolde haue the kyngis frendship and yf ye wil that the kynge take you in to his grace and loue you / saye that ye your self haue made the lettre and endited it / and haue gyuen the counseyl that it is so wel made and wreton / ye shal haue grete thank therfore /

bellyn the ramme was glad herof and thought he shold haue grete thank and saide reynarde I wote wel that ye now doo for me / I shal be in the court gretly preysed whan it is knowen that I can so wel endyte and make alettre / thaugh I can not make it / ofte tymes it happeth that god suffreth somme to haue worship and thanke of the labouris and connyng of other men / and so it shal bifalle me now / Now what counseyle ye reyner / shal kywart [t]he hare come wyth me to the court /

nay sayd the foxe / he shal anone folowe yow / he may not yet come / for he muste speke wyth his aunte /

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NOw goo ye forth to fore / I shal shewe to kywart secrete things whiche ben not yet knowen /

bellyn sayde fare wel reynart / and wente hym forth to the court / and he ran and hasted so faste that he cam to fore mydday to the court / and fonde the kynge in his palays wyth his barons / the kynge meruaylled whan he saw hym brynge the male agayn whiche was made of the beres skyn / the kyng saide saye on bellyn fro whens come ye / where is the foxe / how is it that he hath not the male with hym /

bellyn sayd my lord I shal saye yow al that I knowe / I accompayned reynard vnto his hows / And whan he was redy he asked me yf I that wold ffor your saacke bere two. lettres to yow / I saide for to do you playsir and worship / I wold gladly bere to yow vij. tho brought he to me this male where in the lettres be / whiche ben endyted by my connyng and I gaf counseyl of the makyng of them / I trowe ye sawe neuer lettres better ne craftelyer made ne endyted /

The kynge commanded anon bokart his secretarye to rede the lettres / ffor he vnderstode al maner langages / tybert the catte and he toke the male of[f] bellyns necke / and bellyn hath so ferre sayd and confessyd / that he therfore was dampned.

THe clerke bokwart vndyde the male / and drewe out kywarts heed and said alas what lettres ben these / certaynly my lord this is kywarts heed /

alas sayde the kynge that euer I beleuid so the foxe / There myghte men see grete heuynesse of the kynge and of the quene / the kynge was so angry that he helde longe doun his heed And atte laste after many thoughtes / he made a grete crye / that alle the bestys were aferde of the noyse /

Tho spack sir firapeel / the lupaerd whiche was sybbe somwhat to the kynge / and saide / sire kyng how make ye suche a noyse ye make sorow ynough thaugh the quene were deed / late this sorowe goo / and make good chere / it is grete shame / be ye not a lorde and kynge of this londe / Is it not alle vnder yow / that here is /

the kynge sayde sir firapeel how sholde I suffre this / one false shrewe and deceyuar hath betrayed me and brought me so ferre / that I haue forwrought and angred my frendes / that I the stoute bruyn the bere / and ysegrym the wulf / whiche sore me

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repenteth / and this go[e]th ayenst my worship that I haue done amys ayenst my beste barons and that I trusted and beleuid so moche the fals horeson the foxe / and my wyf is cause therof / she prayde me so moche that I herde her prayer and that me repenteth / thaugh it be to[o] late /

what thawh sir kyng said the lupaerd / yf ther be ony thyng mysdon / it shal be amended we shal gyue to bruyn the bere to ysegrym the wulf / and to erswyn hys wyf for the pece of his skynne and for their shoes for to haue good pees bellyn the ramme / for he hath confessyd hymself that he gaf counseyl and consentyd to kywardes deth / it is reson that he aby[d]e it / And we alle shal goo fecche reynard and we shal areste hym and hange hym by the necke withoute lawe or Iugement / and ther with alle shul be contente /

How bellyn the ramme and alle his lignage were gyuen in the handes of ysegrym and bruyn and how he was slayn / capitulo .xxij°.

THe kynge saide I wil do it gladly / firapel the lupaerd wente tho to the pryson / and vnbonde them firste / and thenne he sayde ye sires I brynge to you a faste pardon and my lordes loue and frendship it repenteth hym and is sory that he euer hath don spoken or trespaced ayenst you / and therfore ye shal haue a good appoyntement / And also amendes he shal / gyue to you bellyn the ramme and alle his lignage fro now forthon to domesdaye / in suche wyse that where someuer ye fynde them in felde or in wode that ye may frely byte and ete them wythoute ony forfayte / And also the kynge graunteth to yow / that ye maye hunte and do the werst ye can to reynard and alle his lygnage wythoute mysdoyng This fayr grete pryuelage wylle the kynge graunte to you euer to holde of hym / And the kynge wille that ye swere to hym neuer to mysdoo / but doo hym homage and feawte I counseil yow to doo this / ffor ye may doo it honorably /

Thus was the pees made by fyrapel the lupaerd frendly and wel / And that coste bellyn the ramme his tabart and also his lyf / and the wulfis lignage holde thise preuilegis of the

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kynge / and in to thys daye they deuoure and ete bellyns lignage where that they may fynde them this debate was begonne in an euyl tyme / ffor the pees coude neuer syth be made bytwene them /

The kynge dyde forth wyth his courte and feste[d] lengthe xij· dayes lenger for loue of the bere and the wulf / So glad was he of the makyng of this pees /

How the kynge helde his feeste / and how lapreel the cony complayned vnto the kynge vpon reynart the fore capitulo ·xxiij°.

TO this grete feste cam al maner of beestis / ffor the kynge dyde do crye this feste ouer alle in that londe / Ther was the moste Ioye and myrthe that euer was seen emonge beestis / Ther was daunsed manerly the houedaunce with shalmouse trompettis and alle maner of menestralsye / the kynge dyde do ordeyne so moche mete / that euerych fonde ynough / And ther was no beest in al his lande so grete ne so lytyl but he was there / and ther were many fowles and byrdes also / and alle they that desired the kynges frendship were there / sauyng reynard the foxe / the rede false pilgrym whiche laye in a wayte to doo harme / and thoughte it was not good for hym to be there / Mete and drynke flowde there / Ther weere playes and esbatemens / The feest was ful of melodye / One myghte haue luste to see suche a feeste /

and right as the feeste had dured viij dayes / a boute mydday cam in the cony lapreel to fore the kynge where he satte on the table with the quene / and sayde al heuyly that all they herde hym that were there / My lorde haue pyte on my complaynt whiche is of grete force and murdre that reynard the foxe wold haue don to me / yester morow as I cam rennyng by his borugh at maleperdhuys he stode byfore his dore without lyke a pylgryme / I supposed to haue passed by hym peasibly toward this feste and whan he sawe me come / he came ayenst me sayeng his bedes I salewed hym / but he spack not one worde / but he raught out his right foot and dubbed me in the necke bytwene myn Eeris / that I had

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wende I sholde haue loste my heed / but god be thanked I was so lyght that I sprange fro hym / wyth moche payne cam I of his clawes / he grymmed as he had ben angry by cause he helde me no faster / tho I escaped from hym I loste myn one ere / and I had foure grete holes in my heed of his sharpe nayles that the blood sprange out / and that I was ny[g]he al a swoun / but for the grete fere of my lyf I sprange and ran so faste fro hym that he coude not ouertake me / See my lord thise grete woundes that he hath made to me with his sharpe longe nayles / I pray yow to haue pite of me and that ye wil punysshe this false traytour and morderar / or ellis shal ther noman goo and comen ouer the heth in saefte / whyles he haunteth his false and shrewde rewle /

How corbant the roke complayned on the foxe for the deth of his wyf capitulo .xxiiij°.

Yght as the cony had made an ende of his complaynt / cam in corbant the roek flowen in the place to fore the kynge and sayde / dere lorde here me / I brynge you hier a pietous complaynt / I wente to day by the morow wyth sharpebek my wyf for to playe vpon the heth And there laye reynart the foxe doun on the grounde lyke a dede keytyf / hys eyen stared and his tonge henge longe out of his mouth / lyke an hounde had ben deed / we tasted and felte his bely / but we fonde theron no lyf / tho wente my wyf and herkened and leyde her ere to fore his mouth for to wite yf he drewe his breeth / whiche mysfylle her euyl / ffor the false felle foxe awayted wel his tyme and whan he sawe her so nygh hym / he caught her by the heed and boote it of[f] / tho was I in grete sorowe and cryde lowde / Alas alas what is there happed / thenne stode he hatelsy vp / and raught so couetously after me that for feere of deth / I trembled and flewh vpon a tree therby and sawe fro ferre how the false keytyf ete and slonked her in so hungerly that he lefte neyther flessh ne bone / nomore but a fewe fethers / the smal fethers he slange them in wyth the flessh / he was so hungry / he wolde wel haue eten tweyne / Tho wente he his strete / tho flewe I doun wyth grete sorow and gadred vp the fetheris for to shewe them to you here / I wolde not be agayn

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in suche peryl and fere as I was there for a thousand marke / of the fynest gold that euer cam out of arabye / My lord the kynge see hier this pyteous werke / Thise ben the fethers of sharpbecke my wyf / my lord yf ye wil haue worship ye muste do herfore Iustyce and auenge you in suche wise as men may fere and holde of yow / ffor yf ye suffre thus youre saufconduyt to be broken / ye your self shal not goo peasibly in the hye way / for tho lordes that do not Iustyce and suffre that the lawe be not executed vpon the theeuis / morderars and them that mysdoo / they be parteners to fore god of alle theyr mysdedes and trespaces / and eueryche thenne / wylle be a lord hym self / dere lorde see wel to for to kepe your self·

How the kynge was sore angry of thise complayntes capitulo .xxv°.

NOble the kynge was sore meuyd and angry whan he had herde thise complayntes of the cony and of the roek / he was so ferdful to loke on that his eyen glymmerd as fyre / he brayed as lowde as a bulle in suche wise that alle the court quoke for feere / at the laste he sayde cryeng / by my crowne and by the trouthe that I owe to my wyf I shal so awreke and auenge this trespaces / that it shal be longe spoken of after / that my saufconduyt and my commandement is thus broken I was ouer nyce that I beleuid so lyghtly the false shrewe / his false flateryng speche deceyued me / He tolde me he wolde go to rome / and for thens ouer see to the holy londe / I gaf hym male and palster and made of hym a pylgrym and mente al trouth / O what false touches can he / how can he stuffe the sleue wyth flockes / but this caused my wyf / it was al by her counseyl / I am not the fyrst that haue been deceyued by wymmens counseyl by whiche many a grete hurte hath byfallen / I pray and comande alle them that holde of me and desire my frendship / be they here or where someuer they be / that they wyth theyr counseyl and dedes helpe me t[o]auenge this ouer g[r]eete trespaas / that we and owris may abyde in honour and worship / and this false theef in shame that he nomore trespace ayenst our saufguarde / I wil mysell in my persone helpe therto al that I maye /

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Segrym the wulf and bruyn the bere herde wel the kynges wordes / and hoped wel to be auengid on reynard the foxe but they durste not speke one word The kynge was so sore meuyd that none durste wel speke /

Atte laste the quene spak / Sire pour dieu ne croyes mye toutes choses que on vous dye / et ne Iures pas legierment / A man of worship shold not lyghtly bileue ne swere gretly vnto the tyme he knewe the mater clerly. and also he ought by right here that other partye speke. There ben many that complayne on other and ben in the defaute them self. Audi alteram partem. here that other partye / I haue truly holden the foxe for good / and vpon that / that he mente no falsehede / I helped hym that I myghte but how someuer it cometh or gooth / is he euyl or good / me thynketh for your worship that ye shold not procede ayenst hym ouer hastely that were not good ne honeste / ffor he may not escape fro you. Ye maye prysone hym or flee hym / he muste obeye your Iugement /

thenne saide fyrapel the lupaerd / My lord me thynketh / my lady here hath saide to you trouthe and gyuen yow good counseyl do ye wel and folowe her and take aduyse of your wyse counseyl / And yf he be founden gylty in the trespaces that now to yow be shewd / late hym be sore punyshid acordyng to hys trespaces / And yf he come not hyther / er this feste be ended and excuse hym / as he ought of right to doo / thenne doo as the counseyl shal aduyse yow / But and yf he were twyes as moche false and ylle as he is / I wolde not counseylle that he sholde be done to more then right /

Isegrym the wulf said sir fyrapal. all we agree to the same· as ferre as it pleseth my lord the kynge / it can not be better. But though reynart were now here. and he cleryd hym of double so many playntes yet shold I brynge forth ayenste hym that he had forfayted his lyf. But I wyl now be stylle and saye not. by cause he is not presente and yet aboue alle this he hath tolde the kynge of certayn tresour lyeng in krekenpyt in hulsterlo. Ther was neuer lyed a greter lesyng. ther wyth he hath vs alle begyled. and hath sore hyndred me and the bere. I dar leye my lyf theron that he sayd not therof a trewe worde. Now robbeth he and steleth vpon the heth / alle that gooth forth by his

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hows / Neuertheles sir firapel what that pleseth the kynge and yow / that muste wel be don / But and yf he wolde haue comen hyther / he myght haue ben here for he had knowleche by the kynges messager /

The kynge sayde we wyl none otherwyse sende for hym / but I commande alle them that owe me seruyse and wylle my honour and worshippe that they make them redy to the warre at the ende of vj dayes / all them that ben archers and haue bowes / gonnes / bombardes/horsemen / and footemen that alle thise be redy to besiege maleperduys / I shal destroye reynart the foxe / yf I be a kynge / ye lordes and sires what saye ye hereto / wille ye doo this wyth a good wyl /

And they sayd and cryed alle / ye[a] we lorde / whan that ye wylle / we shal alle goo with yow.

How grymbert the dasse warned the foxe / that the kynge was wroth with hym and wold slee hym capitulo .xxvj°.

ALle thise wordes herde gymbert the dasse whiche was his brother sone / he was sory and angry yf it myght haue prouffyted he ranne thenne the hye way to maleperduys ward / he spared nether busshe ne hawe / but he hasted so sore that he swette / he sorowed in hym self for reynart his rede eme / and as he wente he saide to hym self Alas in what daunger be ye comen in / where shal ye become shal I see you brought fro lyf to deth / or elles exyled out of the lande / truly I may be wel sorouful / for ye be heed of alle our lygnage / ye be wyse of counseyl / ye be redy to helpe your frendes whan they haue nede / ye can so wel shewe your resons / that where ye speke / ye wynne all /

with suche maner wayllyng / and pytous wordes cam grymbert to maleperduys /

And fonde reynart his eme there standyng / whiche had goten two pygeons / as they cam first out of her neste to assaye yf they coude flee and because the fethers on her wyngis were to[o] shorte / they fylle doun to the ground / And as reynart was gon out to seche his mete / he espyed them and caught hem and was comen home with hem /

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And whan he sawe grymbert comyng / he taryed and said / welcome my best beloued neuew that I knowe in al my kynrede / ye haue ronne faste / ye ben al be swette / haue ye ony newe tydynges /

alas said he / lyef eme it standeth euyl wyth yow / ye haue loste both lyf and good / the kynge hath sworn that he shal gyue you a shameful deth / he hath commanded alle his folke withyn vj dayes for to be here / Archers / fotemen / horsemen / And peple in waynes· And he hath gunnes / bombardes tentes and pauyllyons / And also he hath do laaden torches / See to fore yow / For ye haue nede / Ysegrym and bruyn ben better now wyth the kynge than I am wyth yow / Alle that they wille / Is doon / Isegrym hath don hym to vnderstande that ye be a theef and a morderar· he hath grete enuye to yow. Lapreel the cony and Corbant the roek haue made a grete complaynt also. I sorow moche for your lyf. That for drede I am alle seke.

Puf said the foxe / dere neuew is ther nothyng ellis / be ye so sore aferd herof Make good chere hardely / thaugh the kynge hym self and alle that ben in the court had sworn my deth / yet shal I be exalted aboue them alle / They maye alle faste Iangle clatre and yeue counseyl / but the courte may not prospere wythoute me and my wyles and subtylte

How reynart the foxe cam another tyme to the courte capitulo .xxviij°.

DEre neuew late alle thise thynges passe and come here in / and see what I shal gyue you / a good payre of fatte pygeons / I loue no mete better / They ben good to dygeste / they may almoste be swolowen in al hool / the bones ben half blode / I ete them wyth that other. I fele my self other whyle encombred in my stomak therfore ete I gladly lyght mete. My wyf ermelyn shal receyue vs frendly / but telle her nothyng of this thynge / ffor she sholde take it ouer heuyly / she is tendre of herte. she myghte for fere falle in somme sekenes / a lytyl thynge gooth sore to her herte. And to morow erly I wil goo with yow to the courte / And yf I may come to speche and may be herde / I shal so ansuere / that I shal touche somme nygh

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ynowh / neuew wyl not ye stande by me / as a frende oughte to doo to another /

yes truly dere eme said grymbert and alle my good is at your commandement /

god thanke you neuew saide the foxe / That is wel said. yf I may lyue I shal quyte it yow / .

Eme said grymbert ye may wel come tofore alle the lordes and excuse yow ther shal none areste yow ne holde as longe as ye be in your wordes / The quene and the lupaerd haue goten that /

then said the foxe / therfor I am glad / thenne I carre not for the beste of them an heer / I shal wel saue my self /

they spake nomore herof / but wente forth in to the burgh / And fonde ermelyn there sittyng by her yonglyngs whiche aroose vp anon and receyuid them frendly / Grymbert salewed his aunte and the chyldren with friendly wordes / the ij pygeons were made redy for theyr soper / Whiche reynard had taken / eche of them toke his part as ferre as it wolde stratche / yf eche of hem had had one more / ther sholde but lytyl haue lefte ouer / the foxe saide / lief nouewe / how lyke / ye my chyldren rosel and reynerdyn they shal do worship to alle our lygnage / They begynne al redy to do wel / that one catcheth wel a chyken and that other a pullet / They conne wel also duke in the water after lapwynches and dokys / I wolde ofte sende them for prouande / but I wil fyrste teche them how they shal kepe them fro the grynnes / fro the hunters and fro the houndes / yf they were so ferre comen that they were wyse / I durste wel truste to them that they shold wel vytaylle vs in many good diuerses metes / That we now lacke / And they lyke and folowe me wel / ffor they playe alle grymmyng and where they hate they loke frendly and meryly· ffor ther by they brynge them vnder their feet / And byte the throte asondre / This is the nature of the foxe / They be swyfte in their takynge whiche pleseth me wel.

Me said grymbert ye may be glad that ye haue suche wyse chyldren / And I am glad of them also by cause they be of my kynne /

Grymbert said the foxe ye haue swette and be wery it were hye tyde that ye were at your reste /

Eme yf it plese you it thynketh me good Tho laye they

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doun on a lytier made of strawe / the foxe hys wyf and hys chyldren wente alle to slepe / But the foxe was al heuy / and laye. sighed and sorowed how he myghte beste excuse hym self /

On the morow erly he ruymed his castel and wente with grymbart / but he toke leue first of dame ermelyn his wyf and of his chyldren / and sayde thynke not longe I muste goo to the court wyth grymbert my cosyn / yf I tarye somwhat be not aferde / and yf ye here ony ylle tydyngis / take it alway for the beste. And see wel to your self and kepe our castel wel I shal doo yonder the beste I can after that I see how it gooth

Alas reyner said she how haue ye now thus taken vpon yow for to go to the court agayn / the last tyme that ye were there ye were in grete ieopardye of your lyf. And ye sayde ye wold neuer come there more.

dame said the foxe. th[e]auenture of the world is wonderly it goth otherwhyle by wenyng / Many one weneth to haue a thing whiche he muste forgoo. I muste nedes now go thyder / be content it is al wythoute drede / I hope to come at alther lengest with in fyue dayes agayn /

Here wyth he departed and wente wyth grymbert to the court ward / And whan they were vpon the heeth thenne sayde reyner / Neuew syth I was laste shryuen I haue don many shrewde tornes / I wolde ye wold here me now of alle that I haue trespaced in / I made the bere to haue a grete wounde for the male whiche was cute out of his skynne / And also I made the wulf and his wyf to lese her shoon / I peased the kynge with grete lesyngis and bare hym on honde that the wulf and the bere wold haue betrayed hym and wolde haue slayn hym / so I made the kynge right wroth with them· where they deseruyd it not / also I tolde to the kynge that ther was grete tresour in hulsterlo of whiche he was neuer the better ne richer / for I lyed al that I sayde / I ledde bellyn the ramme and kywart the hare with me / and slewe kyward and sente to the kynge by bellyn kywarts heed in skorn / And I dowed the cony bytwene his eeris that almost I benamme his lyf from hym ffor he escaped ayenst my wyl / he was to me ouerswyft / The roeke may wel complayne / for I swolowed in dame sharpbeck his wyf / and also I haue forgoten on thyng the laste tyme that I was shreuen to you / Which I haue syth bethought me / And it was of grete deceyte that I dyde whiche I now wyll telle yow /

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I cam wyth the wulf walkynge bytwene houthulst and eluerdynge / There sawe we goo a rede mare / And she had a black colte or a fool of iiij monethis olde / whiche was good and fatte Isegrym was almost storuen for hunger / And prayd me goo to the mare / and wyte of her yf she wold selle her fool /

I ran faste to the mare / And axed that of her / she sayd she wold selle it for money /

I demaunded of her how she wold selle it /

she sayde it is wreton in my hyndre foot / Yf ye conne rede and be a clerk ye may come see and rede it.

Tho wyste I wel where she wold be. and I saide nay for sothe I can not rede / And also I desyre not to bye your chylde· Isegrym hath sente me hether. and wold fayn knowe the prys therof /

the mare saide late hym come thenne hym self / And I shall late hym haue knowleche /

I sayde / I shal / and hastely wente to ysegrym and saide / eme wil ye ete your bely ful of this colte / so goo faste to the mare for she taryeth after yow / She hath do wryte the pris of her colte vnder her fote she wolde that I shold haue redde it / but I can not one lettre / whiche me sore repenteth / ffor I wente neuer to scole / eme wylle ye bye that colte / conne ye rede so maye ye bye it /

oy neuew that can I wel what shold me lette / I can wel frenshe latyn englissh and duche. I haue goon to scole at oxenford I haue also wyth olde and auncyent doctours ben in the audyence and herde plees / and also haue gyuen sentence / I am lycensyd in bothe lawes / what maner wrytyng that ony man can deuyse / I can rede it as perfyghtly as my name· I wyl goo to her and shal anon vnderstonde the prys / and he bad me to tarye for hym /

and he ranne to the mare / and axed her how she wold selle her fool or kepe it /

she sayde the somme of the money standeth wreton after on my fote

he said late me rede it

she said doo and lyfte vp her foot whiche was newe shood wyth yron and vj stronge nayles / and she smote hym wythout myssyng on his heed that he fyl doun as he had ben deed / a man shold wel haue ryden a myle er he aroos / The mare trotted a way wyth her colte / And she left Isegrym lyeng

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shrewdly hurt and wounded He laye and bledde / And howled as an hound / I wente tho to hym and sayde / Sir ysegrym dere eme how is it now wyth yow. haue ye eten ynowh of the colte. is your bely ful. why gyue ye me no part I dyde your erande. haue ye slepte your dyner I pray yow telle me what was wreton vnder the mares fote what was it. prose or ryme. metre or verse. I wold fayn knowe it. I trowe it was cantum. for I herde you synge me thoughte fro ferre. for ye were so wyse that noman coude rede it better than ye /

Alas reynart alas said the wulf I pray you to leue youre mockyng. I am so foule arayed and sore hurte / than an herte of stone myght haue pyte on me. The hore wyth her longe legge had an yron foot I wende the nayles therof had ben lettres / and she hytte me at the fyrst stroke vj. grete woundes in my heed that almost it is clouen. suche maner lettres shal I neuer more desire to rede /

Dere eme is that trouthe that ye telle me / I haue grete meruaylle / I heelde you for one of the wysest clerkes that now lyue / Now I here wel / it is true that I long syth haue redde and herde / that the beste clerkes ben not the wysest men /

The laye peple otherwhyle wexe wyse / the cause that thise clerkes ben not the wysest / is that they studye so moche in the connyng and science / that they therin doole / Thus brought I Isegrym in this grete laste and harme. That he vnneth byhelde his lyf /

Yef neuew now haue I tolde yow alle my synnes that I remembre. What so euer falle at the courte. I wote neuer how it shal stonde with me there. I am not now so sore aferd· ffor I am clere from synne I wyl gladly come to mercy / and receyue penance by your counseyl·

grymbert sayde the trespaces ben grete / neuertheles who that is deed muste abyde deed. and therfore I wyl forgyue it you alto gydre / With the fere that ye shal suffre therfore / er ye shal conne excuse yow of the deth / and hier vpon I wyl assoylle you. but the moste hyndre that ye shal haue shal be. that ye sente kywarts heed to the court And that ye blynded the kynge wyth sutthe lyes / Eme that was right euyl doon /

The foxe sayde. what lyef neuew. Who that wyl go thurgh the world this to here. and that to see / and that other to telle. truly it may not clerly be done. how shold

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ony man handle hony. but yf he lycked his fyngres· I am oftymes rored and prycked in my conscience as to loue god aboue all thynge· and myn euen crysten as my self. as is to god wel acceptable. and accordyng to his lawe/ But how wene ye that reson wythin forth fyghteth ayenst the outeward wylle than stonde I alle stylle in my self that me thynketh I haue loste alle my wittes/And wote not what me eyleth I am thenne in suche a thought/I haue now alle lefte my synnes/ And hate alle thynge that is not good/and clymme in hye contemplacion abone his commandements but this specyal grace haue I whan I am alone/But in a short whyle after whan the world cometh in me thenne fynde I in my waye so many stones/and the fote spores that thyse loos prelates/and riche preestys goo in/that I am anone taken agayn/thenne cometh the world and wyl haue this/ And the flesshe wyl lyue plesantly/whiche leye to fore me so many thinges that I thenne lese alle my good thoughtis and purpoos/I here there synge pype/lawhe/playe/and alle myrthe/ And I here that these prelates and riche curates preche and saye al other wyse/than they thynke and doo/ There lerne I to lye/the lesynges ben moste vsed in the lordes courtes/certaynly lordes/ladyes/ prestis and clerkes maken moste lesyngis/Men dar not telle to the lordes now the trouthe/Ther is defaute/I muste flatre and lye also/or ellis I shold be shette wythoute the dore/I haue ofte herde men saye trouthe and rightfully/And haue theyr reson made wyth a lesynge lyke to theyr purpose and brought it in and wente thurgh by cause their mater shold seme the fayrer/The lesyng oftymes cometh vnauysed/And falleth in the mater vnwetyngly. And so whan she is wel cladde/it goth forth thurgh with that other/

HEre neuew thus muste men now lye here/and there saye soth flatre/and menace/praye· and curse/And seke euery man vpon his feblest and wekest/who otherwyse wylle now haunte and vse the world/than deuyse alesyng in the fayrest wyse/and that bywymple with kerchieuis aboute in suche wise that men take it for a trouthe/he is not ronne away fro his maister/Can he that subtylte in suche wise that he stamer not in his wordes/and may thenne be herde/ neuew/this man may doo wonder he may were skarlet and

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gryse / he wynneth in the spyrituel lawe and temporal also and where sommeuer he hath to doo / Now ben ther many false shrewis that haue grete enuye that they haue so grete fordele / And wene that they conne also wel lye / And take on them to lye and to telle it forth / he wolde fayn ete of the fatte morsellis. but he is not bileued ne herd / And many ben ther that be so plompe and folisshe· that whan they wene beste to prononce and shewe their matere and conclude. They falle besyde and oute therof. And can not thenne helpe hem self / and leue theyr mater wythout tayl or heed and he is a compted for a fool / And many mocke them ther with / but who can gyue to his lesynge a conclusion / and prononce it without tatelyng lyke as it were wreton to fore hym / and that he can so blynde the peple / That his lesynge shal better be bileuid than the trouthe / That is the man. What connyng is it to saye the trouth that is good to doo. How lawhe thise false subtyl shrewis that gyue counseyl to make thise lesynges. and sette them forth / And maken vnright goo aboue right / and make billes / and sette in thynges that neuer were thought ne sayd / and teche men see thurgh their fyngres And alle for to wynne money / and late their tonges to hyre for to mayntene and strengthe their lesyngis alas neuewe this is an euyl connyng / of whiche. lyf. scathe and hurte may come ther of /

I Saye not but that otherwhyle men muste Iape / bourde and lye in smale thyngis / for who so sayth alway trouthe. he may not now goo nowher thurgh the world. ther ben many that playe placebo. who so alleway sayth trouth. shal fynde many lettyngis in his way. Men may wel lye whan it is nede / and after amende it by counseyl / ffor alle trespaces / ther is mercy. Ther is no man so wyse / but he dooleth other whyle /

Grymbert sayde wel dere eme what thynge shal you lette. ye knowe al thyng at the narewest / ye shulde brynge me hastely in dotyng your resons passen my vnderstandyng / what nede haue ye to shryue you / ye shulde your self by right be the preest / And lete me and other sheep come to you for to be shryuen / ye knowe the state of the world in suche wyse as noman may halte tofore you /

Wyth suche maner talkynge they cam walkyng in to the

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court / The foxe sorowed somwhat in his herte / Neuertheles he bare it out and stryked forth thurgh alle the folke til he cam in to the place where the kynge hym self was /

And grymbert was alway by the foxe and sayd eme be not a ferde. and make good chere / who that is hardy / th[e]auenture helpeth hym / Oltymes one day is better than somtyme an hole yere /

the foxe saide / Neuew ye saye trouthe / god thanke you ye comfort me wel /

And forth he wente and lokyd grymly here and there as who saith / what wylle ye here come I / he sawe there many of his kynne standyng which yonned hym but lytyl good / as the otter beuer and other to the nombre of· x. whome I shal. name afterward / And somme were there that loued hym·

The ffoxe cam in and fyl doun on his knees to fore the kyng and began his wordes and sayde·

How reynart the foxe excused hym bifore the kynge capitulo .xxviij°.

Od fro whom nothyng may be hyd / and aboue alle thyng is myghty saue my lord the kynge and my lady the quene and gyue hym grace to knowe who hath right and who hath wronge / For ther lyue many in the world that seme otherwise outward than they be withinne / I wolde that god shewde openly euery mans mysdedes / and alle theyr trespaces stoden wreton in theyr forehedes / and it coste me more than I now saye / And that ye my lord the kynge knewe as moche as / I doo / how I dispose me bothe erly and late in your seruyse / And therfore am I complayned on of the euyl shrewys and wyth lesynges am put out of your grace and consayte / and wold charge me with grete offencis wythoute deseruyng ayenst al right / Wherfore I crye out harowe on them that so falsely haue belyed me / and brought me in suche trouthe / how be it I hope and knowe you bothe my lorde and my lady for so wyse and discrete / that ye be not ledde nor bileue suche lesyngis ne false talis out of the right waye for ye haue not be woned so to doo / Therfore dere lorde I biseche you to considre by

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your wysedom alle thynge by right and lawe / is it in deede or in speche / do euery man right / I desire no better he that is gylty and founde fawty late hym be punysshyd / men shal wel knowe er I departe out of this courte / who that I am / I can not flatre I wil allewey shewe openly my heed.

How the kynge answerd vpon reynarts excuse.

ALle they that were in the palays weren alle stylle and wondred that the foxe spack so stoutly / the kynge sayde / ha reynart how wel can ye your falacye and salutacion doon but your fayr wordes may not helpe you I thynke wel that ye shal this daye for your werkis be hanged by your necke / I wil not moche chyde wyth you But I shal shorte your payne / that ye loue vs wel / that haue ye wel shewde on the cony and on corbant the roeck / your falsenes and your false Inuencions shal without longe taryeng make you to deye / A pot may goo so longe to water / that at the laste it cometh to broken hoom / I thynke your potte that so ofte hath deceyued vs / shal now hastly be broken /

reynart was in grete fere of thise wordes· he wold wel. he had ben at coleyn / when he cam thedyr / Thenne thought he I muste her thurgh / how that I doo

my lorde the kynge seyd he / it were wel reson that ye herde my wordes alle out / thaugh I were dampned to the deth / yet ought ye to here my wordes out. I haue yet here to fore tyme gyuen to you many a good counseyl and prouffytable / And in nede alwey haue byden by yow where other beestis haue wyked and goon theyr way / yf now the euyl beestis with false maters haue to fore you wyth wronge belyed me / and I myght not come to myn excuse / ought I not thenne to playne / I haue to fore this seen that I shold be herde by fore another / yet myght thise thyngis wel chaunge and come in theyr olde state / Olde good dedes ought to be remembrid / I see here many of my lygnage and frendes standyng that seme they sette now lytyl by me / Whiche neuertheles sholde sore dere in theyr hertes. that ye my lord the kynge sholde destroye me wrongfully yf ye so dyde he sholde destroye the trewest seruant that ye haue in alle your landes / what wene ye syr

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kynge / hadde I knowen my self gylty in ony feat or broke. that I wold haue comen hether to the lawe emonge alle myne enemyes / Nay sire nay / not for alle the world of rede gold / ffor I was fre and at large / What nede had I to do that / but god be thanked I knowe my self clere of alle mysdedes that I dar wel come openly in the lyghte and to answere to alle the complayntes that ony man can saye on me / but whan grymbert brought me first thise tydyngis / tho was I not wel plesed but half fro my self that I lepe here and there as an vnwyse man / And had I not ben in the censures of the chyrche / I had wythoute taryeng haue comen / but I wente dolynge on the heeth / and wist not what to doo for sorowe /

And thenne it happed that mertyne myn eme the ape mette wyth me. Whiche is wyser in clergie than somme preest. he hath ben aduocate for the bysshop of cameryk ix yere duryng. he sawe me in this grete sorow and heuynes. and saide to me / dere cosyn me thynketh ye ar not wel wyth your self / what eyleth yow. who hath dyspleseyth yow. Thynge that thoucheth charge ought to be gyuen in knowleche to frendis. A triew frende is a grete helpe. he fyndeth ofte better counseyl than he that the charge resteth on. ffor who someuer is charged wyth maters is so heuy and acombred with them that ofte he can not begynne to fynde the remedye· ffor suche be so woo lyke as they had loste theyr Inwytte.

I Saide dere eme ye saye trouthe. For in lyke wyse is fallen to me. I am brought in to a grete heuynes vndeseruid and not gylty / by one to whom I haue alway ben an herty and grete frende / that is the cony whiche cam to me yesterday in the morenyng where as I satte to fore my hows and sayd matyns /

He tolde me he wolde goo to the court and salewed me frendly and I hym agayn /

Tho sayd he to me / good reynard I am an hongred and am wery / haue ye ony mete.

I saide ye ynowh come nere·

Tho gaf I hym acopel of mayncheties with swete butter / It was vpon a wednesday on whiche day I am not wonte to ete ony flessh / And also I fasted by cause of this feste of whitsontyd whiche approuched / For who that wylle taste of the ouerest wysehede / and lyue goostly in kepyng the com-

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mandements of our lord / he muste faste and make hym redy ayenst the hye festes / Et vos estote parati / dere eme I gaf hym fayr whyte breed with swete butter / wherwyth a man myght wel be easid that were moche hongry.·.

And whan he had eten his bely fulle / tho cam russel my yongest sone / and wold haue taken away that was lefte / For yonge chyldren wold alway fayne eten / And with that he tasted for to haue taken somwhat / the cony smote russel to fore his mouthe that his teeth bledde / and [he] fyl doun half a swoun / whan reynardyn myn eldest sone sawe that. he sprange to the cony and caught hym by the heed. and shold haue slayn hym. had I not reskowed hym I helpe hym that he wente fro hym / and bete my chyde sore therfore.

Iapreel the cony ran to my lord the kyng and saide I wold haue murdred hym See eme thus come I in the wordes / and I am leyde in the blame. And yet he complayneth and I playne not /

After this cam corbant the roek fleyng wyth a sorouful noyse / I asked what hym eyled.

and he said alas my wyf is deed / yonder lyeth a dede hare full of mathes and wormes / and there she ete so moche therof. that the wormes haue byten a two her throte /

I axed hym how cometh that by / he wold not speke a worde more but flewe his waye / And lete me stande·

Now saith he that I haue byten and slayn her / how shold I come so nygh her / for shee fleeth / and I goo a fote. beholde dere eme thus am I born an honde. I may saye wel that I am vnhappy / But parauenture it is for myn olde synnes / hit were good for me yf I coude paciently suffre it.

The ape saide to me / Neuew ye shal goo to the courte to fore the lordes and excuse yow /

ALas eme thatmaynotbe. ffor the archedeken hath put me in the popes curse / by cause I counseylled ysegrym the wulf for to leue his religyon at elmare and forsake his habyte / he complayned to me that he lyuyd so straytly as in longe fastyng and many thyngis redyng and syngyng that he coude not endure it· Yf he shold longe abyde there he shold deye. I had pyte of his complaynyng / And I helpe hym as a trewe frende that he cam oute. Whiche now me sore repenteth. for he laboureth al that he can ayenst me to the kynge for to do me behanged. thus doth he euyl for

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good. See eme thus am I at the ende of al my wyttes and of counseyl. For I muste goo to rome for an absolucion. And thenne shal my wyf and chyldren suffre moche harme and blame. For thise euyl bestis that hate me / shulle do to hem alle the hurte they maye and fordryue them wher they can / And I wold wel defende hem yf I were fre of the curse / for thenne wold I goo to the court and excuse me / where now I dar not / I shold do grete synne yf I cam emonge the good peple / I am aferde god sholde plaghe me.

NAy cosyn be not aferd· er I shold suffre you in this sorow I knowe the way to rome wel. I vnderstande me on this werke. I am called ther mertyne the bisshops clerke. and am wel byknowen there. I shal do syte the archedeken and take a plee ayenst hym. and shal brynge with me for you an absolucion ayenst his wil / for I knowe there alle that is for to be doon or lefte there dwelleth symon myn eme whiche is grete and myghty ther. who that may gyue ought / he helpeth hym anon / ther is prentout· wayte scathe / and other / of my frendis and alyes Also I shal take somme money with me / yf I nede ony. the preyer is wyth yeftes hardy. wyth money alleway the right goth forth. A trewe frende shal for his frende auenture both lyf and good / and so shal I for you in your right

Cosyn make good chere I shal not reste after to morow til I come to rome / and I shal solycyte your maters / And goo ye to the court as sone as ye may / all your mysdedes / and tho synnes that haue brought you in the grete sentence and curse / I make you quyte of them and take them in my self / whan ye come to the court ye shal fynde there rukenawe my wyf / her two susters and my thre chyldren and many mo of our lignage / dere cosyn speke to them hardely / my wyf his sondrely wyse / and wil gladly do somme what for her frendis / who that hath nede of helpe shal fynde on her grete frendship / one shal alway seke on his frendis / thaugh he haue angred them / for blood must krepe / where it can not goo / And yf so be that ye be so ouer chargyd that ye may haue no right / thenne sende to me by nyght and day to the courte of rome / and late me haue knowleche therof / and alle tho that ben in the lande is it kynge or quene / wyf or man I shall brynge then alle in the popes curse / and sende there an Inderdicte that noman shal rede ne syngen ne crystene

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chyldren / ne burye the deede ne receyue sacramente / tyl that ye shal haue good ryght / Cosyn this shal I wel gete / for the pope is so sore old that he is but lytil sette by / And the cardynal of pure gold hath alle the myght of the court / he is yonge and grete of frendis he hath a concubyne / whom he moche loueth / And what she desyreth that geteth she anone / see cosyn / she is myn nece / and I am grete and may doo moche with her in suche wyse / what I desyre / I faylle not of it / but am alway furtherd therin / wherfore cosyn byd my lord the kyng that he doo you right / I wote wel he wil not warne you / for the right is heuy ynough to euery man /

MY lord the kyng whan I herde this I lawhed / and wyth grete gladnes cam hether and haue told you alle trouthe / yf ther be ony in this court that can leye on me ony other mater wyth good witnesse and preue it as ought to be to a noble man / late me thenne make amendes acordyng to the lawe / and yf he wil not leue of[f] herbi / thenne sette me day and feld and I shal make good on hym also ferre as he be of as good birthe as i am and to me lyke / and who that can wyth fyghtyng gete the worship of the felde / late hym haue it / this right hath standen yet hetherto. And I wil not it sholde be broken by me. the lawe and right doth noman wrong /

ALle the beestis both poure and riche were alle stylle whan the foxe spak so stoutly / the cony laprel and the roek were so sore afeide that they durste not speke· but pyked and stryked them out of the court bothe two. and whan they were a room fer in the playne they saide. god graunte that this felle murderare may fare euyl. he can bywrappe and couere his falshede. that his wordes seme as trewe as the gospel herot knoweth noman than we. how shold we brynge wytnesse. it is better that we wyke and departe· than we sholde holde a felde and fyghte with hym· he is so shrewde. ye[a] thaugh ther of vs were fyue we coude not defende vs. but that he shold sle vs alle.

Isegrym the wulf and bruyn the bere / were woo in hem self whan they sawe thise tweyne rume the court /

THe kinge sayde / yf ony man wil complayne late hym come forth / and we shal here hym· yesterday camen here so many where ben they now Reynart is here /

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THe foxe saide. my lord ther ben many that complayne / that and yf they sawe their aduersarye they wold be stylle and make no playnte / witnes now of laprel the cony and Corbant the roek / whiche haue complayned on me to yow in my absence / but now that I am comen in your presence they flee away / And dar not abyde by theyr wordes / yf men shold byleue false shrewes / it shold do moche harme and hurte to the good men / as for me it skylleth not Neuertheles my lord yf they had by your commandement axed of me forgyfnes / how be it they haue gretly trespaced / yet I had for your sake pardoned and forgyue them / for I wil not be out of charyte / ne hate ne complayne on myne enemyes / but I sette alle thyng in goddes hand he shall werke and auenge it as it plesyth hym.

THe kynge sayde reynart / me thynketh ye be greuyd as ye saye / ar ye withinforth as ye seme outward / Nay it is not so cleer ne so open nowher nyghe / as ye here ȝaue shewed / I muste saye what my gryef is / whiche towcheth your worship and lyf / that is to wete / that ye haue don a foule and shameful trespaas / whan I had pardonned you alle your offencis and trespacis / and ye promysed to goo ouer the see on pylgremage / And gaf to you male and staf / And after this ye sente me by bellyn the ramme the male agayn and theryn kywarts heed / how myght ye do amore reprouable trespaas / how were ye so hardy to dore to me doo suche a shame / is it not euyl don to sende to a lorde / his seruaunts heed / ye can not saye nay here agaynst for bellyn the ram whiche was our chapelayn tolde vs al the mater how it happed / suche reward as he had whan he brought vs the message / the same shal ye haue or right shal faylle /

tho was reynart so sore aferd that he wist not what to saye / he was at his wittes ende / and loked aboute hym pytously and sawe many of his kyn and alyes that herde alle this but nought they saide / he was al pale in his visage but noman proferd hym hand ne fote to helpe hym /

the kinge said thou subtyl felaw and fals shrewe why spekest thou not [art thou] nowe dombe.

The foxe stode in grete drede and syghed sore that alle herde hym / But the wulf and the bere were glad herof.

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How dame rukenawe answerd for the fore to the kynge. capitulo xxix°.

DAme rukenawe the she ape reynarts aunte was not well plesyd / She was grete wyth the quene and wel belouyd / hit happed wel for the foxe that she was there. ffor she vnderstood alle wysedom / And she durste wel speke / where as it to doo was / where euer she cam euerich was glad of her /

she sayde my lord the kyng ye ought not to be angry whan ye sytte in Iugement / ffor that becometh not your noblesse· A man that sytteth in Iugement ought to put fro hym alle wrath and angre / A lorde ought to haue dyscrescion that shold sytte in Iustyse / I knowe better the poyntes of the lawe / than somme that were furryd gownes / ffor I haue lerned many of them / and was made connying in the lawe / I had in the popes palays of woerden a good bedde of heye / where other beestes laye on the harde grounde and also whan I had there to doo / I was suffred to speke / and was herd to fore another / by cause I knewe so wel the lawe / Seneca wryteth that a lorde shal oueral doo right and lawe / he shal charge none to whom he hath gyuen his saufgarde to aboue the right and lawe / the lawe ought not to halte for noman / And euery man that stondeth here wolde wel bethynke hym what he hath doon and bydryuen in his dayes he shold the better haue pacience and pyte on Reynarte / late euery man knowe hym self / that is my counseyl / ther is none that stondeth so surely / but otherwhyle he falleth or slydeth / who that neuer mysdede ne synned / is holy and good and hath no nede to amende hym / whan a man doth amys / and thenne by counseyl amendeth it / that is humaynly / and so ought he to doo / but away to mysdo and trespace / and not to amende hym / that ys euyl and a deuely lyf / Merke thenne what is wreton in the gospel Estote misericordes / be ye mercyful yet standeth ther more / Nolite iudicare / et non iudica bimini / deme ye noman / and ye shal not be demed / Ther standeth also how the pharisees brought awoman taken in aduoultrye and wold haue stoned her to deth / they axed our lord what he said therto / he said who of yow alle is withoute synne / late

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hym caste the fyrste stone / tho abode noman but lefte her there stondyng.

ME thynketh it is so hyere / ther be many that see a strawe in an others [e]ye / that can not see a balke in his owne / there be many that deme other / and hym self is worst of alle / thaugh one falle ofte / and at laste aryseth vp and cometh to mercy / he is not therof dampned God receyueth alle them that desyre hys mercy late noman condampne another / though they wyste that he had don amys / yet late them see theyr owne defawtes / and thenne may they them self correcte fyrst / and thenne reynert my cosyn shold not fare the werse for his fadre and his graunfadre / haue alway ben in more loue and reputaconn in this court than Isegrym the wulf or bruyn the bere with al theyr frendis and lignage / hit hath ben here to fore an vnlyke comparison / the wysedom of Reynart my cosyn / and the honour and worship of hym that he hath doon and the counseyl of them / ffor they knowe not how the world gooth / me thynketh this court is al torned vp so doon / Thise false shrewes flaterers and deceyuours arise and wexe grete by the lordes and ben enhaunsed vp / And the good triewe and wyse ben put doun / For they haue ben woned to counseylle truly and for th [e h]onour of the kyng I can not see how this may stonde longe /

Thenne said the kynge / dame yf he had don to yow suche trespaas as he hath don to other it shold repente yow· Is it wonder that I hate hym / he breketh alway my saufgarde / haue ye not herde the complayntes that here haue ben shewde of hym of murdre / of theefte / And of treson / haue ye suche trust in hym / Thynke ye that he is thus good and cleer / thenne sette hym vp on the awter and worshipe and praye to hym as to asaynte / But ther is none in alle the world that can saye ony good of hym / ye maye saye moche for hym / but in th[e]ende ye shal fynde hym al nought / he hath nether kyn ne wyn ne frende that wylle enterprise to helpe hym he hath so deseruyd / I haue grete meruaylle of yow / I herde neuer of none that hath felawsshippid with hym that euer thanked hym or saide ony good of hym / sauf yow now / but alway he hath stryked hem with his tayl /

the she ape ansuerd and said / my lord I loue hym and

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haue hym in grete chierte. And also I knowe a good dede that he ones in your presence dyde / wherof ye coude hym grete thanke / though now it be thus torned / yet shal the heuyest / weye moste / a man shal loue his frende by mesure / and not his enemye hate ouermoche / stedfastnes and constaunce is fyttyng and behoueth to the lordes. how someuer the world torneth. Me ought not preyse to[o] moche the daye. tyl euen be come. good counseyl is good for hym that wil doo ther after.

A parable of aman that delyuered a serpent fro peryl of deth. capitulo rrr°.

NOw two yere passid cam a man and a serpent here in to this court for to haue Iugement. whiche was to yow and youres right doubteful. The serpent stode in an hedche where as he supposed to haue gon thorugh / but he was caught in a snare by the necke. that he myght not escape without helpe but shuld haue lost his lyf there. the man cam forth by. and the serpente called to hym and cryde. and prayd the man that he wolde helpe hym out of the snare. or ellis he muste there dye:

The man had pyte of hym and saide / yf thou promyse to me that thou wilt not enuenyme me ne do me none harme ne hurte I shal helpe the[e] out of this peryl /

The serpente was redy and swore a grete othe that he now ne neuer sholde doo hym harme ne hurte·

Thenne he vnlosed hym and delyuerd hym out of the snare / And wente forth to gydre a good whyle / that the serpente had grete hongre for he had not eten a grete while to fore. and sterte to the man and wold haue slayn hym. the man sterte awaye and was a ferde and said / wilte thou now sle me / hast thou forgoten the oth that thou madest to me that thou sholdest not mysdoo ne hurte me

The serpent answerd I maye do it good / to fore al the world that I doo / the nede of hongre may cause a man to breke his oth /

The man saide yf it may be not bettre / gyue me so longe respyte tyl we mete and fynde that may Iuge the mater by right /

The serpente graunted therto / thus they wente to gydre

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so longe that they fonde tyselyn the rauen / And slyndpere his sonne / there rehersed they theyr resons /

Tiselyn the rauen Iuged anon that he shold ete the man / he wolde fayn haue eten his parte and his sone also /

The serpent said to the man / how is it now / what thynke ye haue I not wonne /

The man saide / how sholde a robber Iuge this he shold haue auayle therby / and also he is allone / ther muste be two or thre atte leste to gydre and that they vnderstande the right and lawe and that don / late the sentence gon / I am neuertheles yl on ynough /

They a greed and wente forth bothe to gydre so longe that they fonde the beer and the wulf to whom they tolde theyr mater /

And they anon Iuged that the serpent shold sle the man / For the nede of hongre breketh oth alway / the man thenne was in grete doubte and fere / and the serpent cam and cast his venym at hym / but the man lepe a way from hym with grete payne /

And said ye doo grete wronge that ye thus lye in a wayte to slee me / ye haue no right therto /

The serpent sayde / Is it not ynough yet / hit hath ben twyes Iuged /

ye[a] sayd the man that is of them that ben wonte to murdre and robbe. Alle that euer they swere and promyse they holde not / but I appele this mater in to the court to fore our lord the kyng / And that thou mayst not forsake And what Iugement that shal be gyuen there / I shal obeye and suffre / and neuer doo the contrarye.

THe bere and the wulf sayden that it shold be so / And that the serpent desired no better / They supposed yf it shold come to fore yow / It shold goo there as they wolde. I trowe ye be wel remembrid herof· Tho cam they alle to the court to fore yow / And the wulues two chyldren cam with theyr fader. Whiche were callyd empty bely and neuer full / by cause they wold ete of the man. ffor they howlyd for grete hongre wherfore ye commaunded them to auoyde your court /

The man stode in grete drede / And called vpon your good grace and tolde how the serpente wolde haue taken

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his lyf from hym to whom he had sauyd his lyf and that aboue his oth and promyse he wold haue deuoured hym/

The serpente answerd I haue not trespaced/And that I reporte me hoolly vn[to] the kyng/For I dyde it to saue my lyf/ffor nede of lyf/one may breke his oth and promyse/

My lord that tyme were ye and alle your counseyl here wyth acombryd For your noble grace sawe the grete sorow of the man/And ye wold not that a man shold for his gentilnes and kyndenes be Iuged to deth/And on that other sith hongre and nede to saue the lyf seketh narowly to be holpen/hier was none in al the court that coude ne knewe the right hierof/There were somme that wolde fayn the man had be holpen/I see them hier stondyng/I wote wel they sayde that they coude not ende this mater/

Thenne commanded ye that reynard my neuew shold come and saye his aduys in this mater/that tyme was he aboue alle other byleuyd and herd in the court/And ye bad hym gyue sentence acordyng to the best right/and we alle shal folowe hym/For he knewe the grounde of the lawe/

reynard said my lord/it is not possyble to yeue a trewe sentence after theyr wordes/for in here sayeng ben ofte lesynges/But and yf I myght see the serpent in the same paryl and nede that he was in whan the man loosed hym and vnbonde/Thenne wyste I wel what I shold saye/And who that wolde doo otherwise he shold mysdoo agayn[st] right/

Thenne sayd ye my lord reynard that is wel said we alle acorde herto/ffor noman can saye better/

Thenne wente the man and the serpente into the place wher as he fonde the serpente/Reynart bad that the serpent shold be sette in the snare in lyke wyse as he was/And it was don/

Thenne sayd ye my lord/reynart how thynketh yow now/ what Iugement shal we gyue.

Thenne sayd reynart the foxe. My lord now ben they bothe lyke as they were to fore. they haue neyther wonne ne loste See my lord how I Iuge for a right also ferre as it shal plese your noble grace. yf the man wil now lose and vnbynde the serpent vpon the promyse and oth. that he to fore made to hym. he may wel doo it. But yf he thynke that he for ony thyng shold be emcombryd or hyndred by the serpent. or for nede of hongre wold breke his othe and promyse. Thenne Iuge I that the man may goo frely where he wyl. and late the

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serpente abyde stylle bounden. like as he myght haue don at the begynnyng. ffor he wold haue broken his oth and promyse/ where as he helpe hym out of suche fereful peryl / Thus thynketh me a ryghtful Iugement that the man shal haue his fre choys / like as he to fore hadde.

IO my lord this Iugement thought yow good / and alle your counseyl whiche at that tyme were by you / and folewed the same / And preysed reynardis wysedom that he had made the man quyte and free / Thus the foxe wysely kepte your noble honour and worship / as a triewe seruaunt is bounde to doo to his lord / wher hath the beer or the wulf don euer to yow so moche worship They conne wel huylen and blasen stele and robbe / and ete fatte morsellis and fylle theyr belyes / And thenne Iuge they for right and lawe that smale theuis that stele hennys and chekyns shold be hanged / But they hem self that stelen kyen oxen and horses/ they shal goo quyte and be lordes / And seme as though they were wyser than salamon / Auycene or aristotiles / And eche wil be holden hye proud / and preised of grete dedes and hardy But and they come where as it is to doo / they ben the firste that flee / Thenne muste the symple goo forth to fore / And they kepe the rereward behynde / Och my lorde these and other lyke to them be not wyse/ but they destroye towne. castel. lande and peple. They retche not whos[e] hows brenneth. so that they may warme them by the coles They seke alle theyr owne auayll and synguler proffyte / But Reynart the foxe and alle his frendis and lignage sorowen and thynke to preferre the honour worship. fordeel and proffyte of theyr lord. and for wise counseyl whiche ofte more prouffyteth here than pryde and boost / This doth reynard / thaugh he haue no thanke / Atte longe it shal be wel knowen / who is beste and doth moste prouffyt / My lord ye saye / that his kynne and lignage drawe al afterward from hym / and stonde not by hym / for his falshede and deceyuable and subtyl touchis / I wolde an other had sayde that / ther sholde thenne suche wrake be taken therof / that hym myght growle that euer he sawe hym / But my lorde we wyl forbere you / ye maye saye your playsir / and also I saye it not by yow / Were ther ony that wolde bedryue ony thyng ayenst yow with wordes or with werkes / hym

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wold we soo doo to / that men shold saye we had ben there / Ther as fyghtyng is / we ben not woned to be aferd· My lorde by your leue I may wel gyue you knoweleche of reynardis frendis and kynne. ther ben many of them that for his sake and loue wille auenture lyf and good. I know my self for one. I am a wyf. I shold yf he had nede sette my lyf and good for hym also I haue thre ful waxen children which ben hardy and stronge / whom I wold alle tò gydre auenture for his loue. rather than I shold see hym destroyed / yet had I leuer dye than I sawe them myscarye to fore myn eyen. so wel loue I hym.

Whiche ben frendes and kynne vnto Reynard the fore. capitulo xxxj°.

THe fyrste chylde is named byteluys. whiche is moche cherysshyd and can make moche sporte and game / wherfore is gyuen to hym the fatte trenchours and moche other good mete whiche cometh wel to prouffyt of fulrompe hys brother / and also my thyrde chylde is a doughter and is named hatenette / she can wel pyke out lyce and netis out of mens heedis / thise thre ben to eche other tryewe / wherfor I loue them wel /

dame rukenawe called hem forth and sayde / welcome my dere chyldren to me forth and stande by reynard your dere neuew /

Thenne sayde she / Come forth alle ye that ben of my kynne and reynarts / and late us praye the kynge that he wille doo to reynart ryght of the lande /

Tho cam forth many a beest anon / as the squyrel / the musehout / the fychews / the martron / the beuer wyth his wyf ordegale / the genete / the ostrole / the boussyng / and the fyret / thyse tweyne ete as fayne palayl as doth reynart / The oter and pantecroet his wyf whom I had almoste forgoten / yet were they to fore wyth the beuer enemyes to the foxe / but they durst not gaynsaye dame rukenawe / for they were aferd of her She was also the wysest of al his kynne of counseyl and was moste doubted / Ther cam also mo than xx other by cause of her for to stande by R[e]ynard / Ther cam also dame atrote with her ij sustres / the wesel / and hermell the asse / the backe / The watreratte and many moo to the nombre of xl / whiche alle camen and stoden by reynard the foxe /

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MY lord the kyng saide rukenawe come and see hier yf reynart haue ony frendis / here may ye see / we ben your trewe subgettis whiche ffor yow wold auenture both lyf and good yf ye had nede / Though ye be hardy myghty and stronge / Oure welwyllyd frendship can not hurte you / late reynard the foxe wel bethynke hym vpon thise maters that ye haue leyd ayenst hym / And yf he can not excuse them / thenne doo hym right we desire no better / And this by right ought to noman be warned /

The quene thenne spack. this saide I to hym yesterday / But he was so fyers and angry that he wold not here it.

the lupaerd saide also. Syre ye may Iuge no ferther than your men gyue theyr verdyte. ffor yf ye wold goo forth by wyl and myghte that were not worshipful ffor your estate here allewaye bothe partyes and thenne by the beste and wysest counseyl gyue Iugement discretly acordyng to the beste right.

the kynge saide. this is al trewe· but I was so sore meuyd whan I was enformed of kywarts deth and sawe his heed. that I was hoot and hasty. I shal here the foxe. can he answere and excuse hym of that is leyd ayenst hym. I shal gladly late hym goo quyte. And also atte requeste of his good frendis and kynne.

Reynart was glad of thise wordis. and thoughte god thanke myn aunte· She hath the rys doo blosme aagayn· She hath wel holpen me forth now. I haue now a good foot to daunse on. I shal now loke out of myne eyen. And brynge forth the fayrest lesyngis that euer man herde. and brynge my self out of this daunger.

How the foxe wyth subtylte excused hym for the deth of kywart the hare and of alle other maters that were leyde ayenst hym and how wyth flateryng gate agayn his pees of the kynge. capitulo xxxij°.

THenne spak reynart the foxe and saide / Alas what saye ye is kywart deed / and where is bellyn the ramme what brought he to yow / whan he cam agayn / ffor I delyuerd to hym thre[e] iewellis / I wold fayn knowe where they ben be comen / That one of hem shold he haue gyuen to yow my lord the kynge / And the other ij to my lady the quene /

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The kynge saide/bellyn brought vs nought ellis but kywarts heed/lyke as I saide you to fore/wherof I toke on hym wrake/I made hym to lose his lyf/ffor the foule kaytyf said to me/that he hym self was of the counseyl of the lettres makyng that were in the male/

Alas my lord is this very trouthe/woo to me kaytyf that euer I was born sith that thise good Iewellis be thus lost myn herte wil breke for sorowe/I am sory that I now lyue/what shal my wyf saie whan she hereth herof/she shal goo out of her wytte for sorow/I shal neuer also longe as I lyue haue her frendship she shal make moche sorowe whan she hereth therof/

The she ape saide Reynard dere neuew/what prouffyteth that ye make al this sorowe late it passe/And telle vs what thise Iewellis were/parauenture we shalle fynde counseyl to haue them agayn yf they be aboue erthe Mayster akeryn shal laboure for them in his bookis/and also we shal curse for them in alle chirchys vnto the tyme that we haue knowleche wher they been/They maye not be loste/

Nay aunte thynke not that/ffor they that haue them wyl not lightly departe fro them. ther was neuer kynge that euer gaf so riche Iewellis as thise be/Neuertheles ye haue somwhat wyth your wordes easyd myn herte and made it lighter than it was/Alas loo here ye may see how he or they to whomme a man trusteth moost is ofte by hym or them deceyuyd/thaugh I shold goo al the world thorough and my lyf in auenture sette therfore/I shal wyte wher thise Iewellis ben becomen.

WYth a dissymylyd and sorouful speche saide the foxe herken ye alle my kynne and frendys/I shal name to yow/thise Iewellis what they were/And thenne may ye saye that I haue a grete losse/that one of them was a rynge of fyn gold/and within the rynge next the fyngre were wreton lettres enameld with sable and asure and ther were thre hebrews names therin/I coude not my self rede ne spelle them/for I vnderstonde not that langage/but maister abrion of tryer he is a wyse man/he vnderstandeth wel al maner of langages and the vertue of al maner herbes/and ther is no beest so fiers ne stronge but he can dompte hym/for yf he see hym ones he shal doo as he wyl/And yet he bileueth not

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on god / He is a Iewe / The wysest in connyng and specially he knoweth the vertue of stones. I shewde hym ones this rynge / he saide that they were tho thre names that seth brought out of paradys whan he brought to his fadre Adam the oyle of mercy / And who someuer bereth on hym thise thre names / he shal neuer be hurte by thondre ne lyghtnyng ne no witchecraft shal haue power ouer hym ne be tempted to doo synne / And also he shal neuer take harm by colde thaugh he laye thre wynters longe nyghtis in the feelde / thaugh it snowed stormed or frore neuer so sore / so grete myght haue thise wordes / wytnes of maister abrion / withoute forth on the rynge stode a stone of thre maner colours / the one part was lyke rede cristalle / and shoon lyke as fyre had ben therin / in suche wyse that yf one wold goo by nyght / hym behoued non other lighte for the shynyng of the stone made and gaf as grete a lyghte as it had ben mydday / That other parte of the stone was whyte and clere as it had ben burnysshid / Who so had in his eyen ony smarte or sorenes / or in his body ony swellyng / or heed ache / or ony sykenes withoutforth yf he stryked this stone on the place wher the gryef is / he shal anon be hole / or yf ony man be seke in his body of venym / or ylle mete in his stomack / of colyk / stranguyllyon / stone / fystel or kanker or ony other sekenes / sauf only the very deth late hym leye this stone in a litle watre / And late hym drynke it / and he shal forthwyth be hole and al quyte of his seknessis / Alas said the foxe we haue good cause to be sory to lese suche a Iewel / fforthermore the thirde colour was grene lyke glas / But ther were somme sprynklis therin lyke purpure / the maister told for trouthe / that who that bare this stone vpon hym shold neuer be hurte of his enemye / and that noman were he neuer so stronge and hardy that myght mysdoo hym / and where euer that he fought he shold haue vyctorye were it by nyght or by daye also ferre as he behelde it fastyng / and also therto where someuer he wente and in what felawship / he shold be bylouyd / though they hadde hated hym to fore / yf he had the ring vpon hym / they shold forgete theyr angre as sone as they sawe hym / Also though he were al naked in a felde agayn an hondred armed men / he shold be wel herted and escape fro them with worship / but he muste be a noble gentle man / and haue no chorles condicions / ffor

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thenne the stone had no myght / and by cause this store was so precious and good / I thought in myself that I was not able ne worthy to bere it / and there fore i sente it to my dere lord the kyng / for i knowe hym for the moste noble that now lyueth / and also alle our welfare and worship lyeth on hym / and for he shold be kepte fro alle drede nede and vngheluck.

IFonde this rynge in my fadres tresour / and in the same place I toke a glasse or a mirrour and a combe whiche my wyf wold algates haue / a man myght wondre that sawe thise Iewellis / I sent thyse to my lady the quene / for I haue founden her good and gracious to me / this Combe myght not be to[o] moche preysed / Hit was made of the bone of a clene noble beest named Panthera / whiche fedeth hym bytwene the grete Ile and erthly paradyse / he is so lusty fayr and of colour / that ther is no colour vnder the heuen / but somme lyknes is in hym / therto he smelleth so swete / that the sauour of hym boteth alle syknessis and for his beaute and swete smellyng all other beestis folowe hym / for by his swete sauour they ben heled of alle syknessis / this panthera hath a fair boon brode and thynne / whan so is that this beeste is slayn al the swete odour restid in the bone which can not be broken ne shal neuer rote ne be destroyed by fyre / by water / ne by smytyng / hit is so hardy ty[g]ht and faste / and yet it is lyght of weyght / The swete odour of it hath grete myght / that who that smelleth it sette nought by none other luste in the world and is easyd and quyte of alle maner diseases and Infirmytes / And also he is ioconde and glad in his herte / this combe is polysshid as it were fyne syluer / and the teeth of it be small and straite / And bytwen the gretter teeth and the smaller is a large felde and space where is coruen many an ymage subt[i]lly made and enameld aboute with fyn gold / the felde is checked with sable and siluer / enameld with cybore and asure / And ther in is th[e h]istorye how venus Juno and pallas strof for th[e]apple of gold / whiche eche of them wold haue had / whiche contrauersye was sette vpon parys / that he shold gyue it to the fayrest of them thre.

PArys was that tyme an herde man and kepte his faders beestis and sheep withoute troye / whan he had resceyuid th[e]apple / Iuno promysed to hym yf he wolde

Iuge that she myght haue th[e]apple / he shold haue the moste richesse of the world / pallas said yf she myght haue th[e]apple she wold gyue hym wysedom and strengthe and make hym so grete a lorde that he shold ouercome alle his enemyes / and whom he wold / venus saide what nedest thou richesse or strengthe / art not thou pryamus sone / and hector is thy brother whiche haue al asye vnder their power / art not thou one of the possessours of grete troye / yf thou wylt gyue to me th[e]apple i shal gyue the[e] the richest tresour of the world and that shal be the fayrest woman that euer had lyf on erthe / ne neuer shal none be born fairer than she / thenne shal[t] thou be richer than riche / And shal clymme aboue al other / ffor that is the tresour that noman can preyse ynough / for honest / fair and good women can put a way many a sorow fro the herte / they be shamefast and wyse / and brynge a man in very Ioye and blysse / Parys herde this venus whiche presented hym this grete Ioye and fair lady and prayd her to name this fayr lady / that was so fair and where she was / venus saide / it is helene kynge menelaus wyf of grece / ther lyueth not anobler. richer. gentiller. ne wyser wyf in al the world / Thenne parys gaf to her th[e] apple and said that she was fayrest / how that he gate afterward helene by the helpe of venus and how he brought her in to troye and wedded her / the grete loue and ioly lyf that they had to gydre / was al coruen in the felde euery thyng by hym self / and the storye wreton.

NOw ye shal here of the mirrour / the glas that stode theron was of suche vertu that men myght see therin / all that was don within a myle / of men of beestis and of al thynge that me wold desire to wyte and knowe / and what man loked in the glasse had he ony dissease / of prickyng or motes / smarte or perles in his eyen he shold be anon heled of it / Suche grete vertu had the glas / is it thenne wondre yf I be meuyd and angry for to lose suche maner Iewellls. The tree in whiche this glas stode was lyght and faste and was named cetyne / hit sholde endure euer er it wold rote or wormes shold hurte it / and therfore kynge salamon seelyd his temple wyth the same wode withynforth / Men preysed it derrer than fyn gold / hit is like to tre of hebenus / of whiche wode kynge Crompart made his hors of tree for loue of kynge morcadigas doughter that was so fayr / whom

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he had wende for to haue wonne / That hors was so made within / that w[h]o someuer rode on hit yf he wolde / he shold be within lesse than on hour / an hondred myle thens / And that was wel preuyd ffor cleomedes the kynges sone wolde not byleue that / That hors of tree had suche myght and vertue / He was yonge lusty and hardy / And desyred to doo grete dedes of prys for to be renomed in this world / And leep on this hors of tree / Crompart torned a pynne that stode on his brest / And anon the horse lyfte hym vp and wente out of the halle by the wyndowe and er one myght saye his pater noster / He was goon more ten myle [a]waye cleomedes was sore aferd and supposed neuer to haue torned agayn / as th[e h]istorye therof telleth more playnly / but how grete drede he had / and how ferre that he rood vpon that horse made of the tree of hebenus er he coude knowe the arte and crafte how he shold torne hym / and how Ioyeful he was whan he knewe it / and how men sorowed for hym / and how he knewe alle this and the ioye therof whan he cam agayn al this I passe ouer for losyng of tyme / but the moste parte of alle cam to by the vertue of the wode /

of whiche wode the tree that the glas stode in was made / and that was without forth of the glas half a foot brood / wherin stode somme strange hystoryes whiche were of gold / of sable / of siluer / of yelow / asure and cynope / thyse sixe colowrs were therin wrought in suche wise as it behoued / and vnder euery hystorye the wordes were grauen and enameld that euery man myght vnderstande what eche historye was / After my Iugement ther was neuer myrour so costly so lustly ne so playsaunt / in the begynnyng stode there an horse made fatte stronge and sore enuyous vpon an herte whiche ran in the feeld so ferre and swyftly that the hors was angry that he ran so ferre to fore hym· and coude not ouertake hym· he thought he shold cacche hym and subdue hym. though he shold suffre moche payne therfore. the horse spack tho to a herdeman in this wyse. yf thou cowdest taken an herte that I wel can shewe the[e] / thou sholdest haue grete prouffyt therof. thou sholdest selle dere his hornes his skyn and his flesshe. the herdeman sayd how may I come by hym. the hors saide sytte vpon me. and I shal bere the[e] and we shal hunte hym til he be take· The herdeman sprange and satte vpon the hors and sawe the herte and he rode after

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but the herte was lyght of foot and swyft. and out ran the hors ferre they honted so ferre after hym that the horse was wery and said to the herdeman that satte on hym. now sytte of[f] I wil reste me / I am al wery. and gyue me leue to goo fro the[e]. The herdeman saide I haue arested the[e] thow mayst not escape fro me· I haue a brydle on thy hede and sporis on my heles thou shalt neuer haue thanke herof / I shal bydwynge and subdue the[e] haddest thou sworn the contrarye.

see how the horse brought hym self in thraldom and was taken in his owne nette. how may one better be taken than by his owne propre enuye suffre hym self to betaken and riden· ther ben many that laboure to hurte other· and they them seluen ben hurt and rewarded with the same

THer was also made an asse and an hound / whiche dwelled bothe with a riche man / The man louyd his hound wel / ffor he pleyde ofte with hym as foike doo with houndis / the hound leep vp and pleyd with his tayl / And lyckyd his maister aboute the mouth / this saw howdwyn the asse / and had grete spyte therof in his herte / and said to hym self / how may this be and what may my lorde see on his fowle hound / whom I neuer see doth good ne proffyt / sauf spryngeth on hym and kysseth hym / But me whom men putten to laboure / to bere and drawe / and doo more in a weke than he wyth his xv shold doo in a hole yere and yet sytteth he neuertheles by hym at the table / and there eteth bones flessh and fatte trenchours / And I haue nothyng but thystles and nettles / And lye on nyghtes on the harde erthe and suffre many ascorn / I wyl no lenger suffre this / I wylle thynke how I may gete my lordes loue and frendship lyke as the hounde doth / Therwyth cam the lorde / And the asse lyft vp his tayl and sprang with his fore feet on the lordes sholdres / And blered grennyd and songe and with his feet made two grete bules aboute his eres / And put forth his mouth and wolde haue kyssed the lordes mouth as he had seen the hound doon / Tho cryde the lorde sore aferde help / help / this asse wil slee me / Thenne cam his seruauntis with good stauis and smyten and bete the asse so sore that he had wende he shold haue loste his lyf / Tho retorned he to his stable and ete thistles and nettles and was an asse as he to fore was.

In lyke wyse who so haue enuye and spyte of an others

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welfare / and were seruyd in lyke wyse / it shold be wel behoefful. Therfor it is concluded that the asse shal ete thistelis and netteles and bere the sacke / though men wold doo hym worship he can not vnderstonde it / but muste vse olde lewde maners / Where as asses geten lordshippis / there men see selde good rewle / For they take hede of nothyng but on theyr synguler prouffyt / yet ben they take up and rysen grete / the more pyte is /

HEr:en ferther how my fadre and tybert the catte wende to gydre / and had sworn by theyr trouthe that for loue ne hate they shold not departe. And what they gate / they shold departe to eche the half / Thenne on atyme they sawe hunters comyng ouer the felde with many houndes / They leep and ronne faste fro them ward al that they myghte as they that were aferd of theyr lyf /

Tybert said the foxe whyther shal we now beste flee / the hunters haue espyed vs / knowe ye ony helpe my fadre trusted on the promyse that eche made to other, And that he wolde for no nede departe fro hym / Tybert said he / I haue a sack ful of wyles yf we haue nede / as ferre as we abyde to gydre we nede not to doubte hunters ne houndes /

Tybert bigan to syghe and was sore aferd / And saide / Reynart what auayllen many wordes / I knowe but one wyle. and theder must I too.

And tho clamme he vpon on hye tree in to the toppe vnder the leuys / Where as hunter ne hounde myghte doo hym non harme. And lefte my fadre allone in Ieoparde of his lyf. ffor the hunters sette on hym the houndes alle that they coude / Men blewe the hornes and cryed and halowed the foxe / Slee and take. Whan tybert the catte sawe that. he mocked and scorned my fadre and said what reynart cosyn vnbynde now your sakke wher al the wylis ben in / it is now tyme ye be so wyse called / helpe your selt / ffor ye haue nede /

this moche muste my fadre here of hym to whom he had most his trust on / And was almoste taken and nygh his deth and he ranne and fledde wyth grete fere of his lyf and lete his male slyde of[f] by cause he wold be the lighter / yet al that coude not helpe hym for the houndes were to[o] swyft and shold haue byten hym / But he had one auenture that ther by he fo[u]nd an old hole / wherin he crepte / and escaped thus the honters and houndes /

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Thus helde this false deceyuer tibaert his sykernes that he had promysed / Alas how many ben there now a dayes that kepe not theyr promyse / and sette not therby though they breke it / And though I hate tybaert herfore / is it wonder but I doo not sikerly / I loue my sowle to[o] wel therto / Neuertheles yf I sawe hym in auenture and mysfalle in his body or in his goodes / I trowe hit shold not moche goo to my herte so that another dyde it / Neuertheles I shal neyther hate hym ne haue enuye at hym / I shal ffor goddes loue forgyue hym yet is it not so clere out of myn herte / but a lytyl ylle wylle to hymward abideth therin as this cometh to my remembraunce / And the cause is that the sensualyte of my flessh fyghteth ayenst reson.

THer stode also in that myrrour of the wulf / how he fonde ones vpon an heth a dede hors flayn· but al the flessh was eten thenne wente he and bote grete morsellis of the bones that for hungre he toke thre[e] or iiij attones and swolowed them in / ffor he was so gredy that one of the bones stack thwart in his mouth / Wherof he had grete payne. And was in grete fere of his lyf / He soughte al aboute for wyse maisters and surgyens and promysed grete yeftis for to be heled of his disease / Atte laste whan he coude nowher fynde remedye he cam to the crane wyth his longe necke and bille / and prayde hym to helpe hym and he wolde loue and rewarde hym so wel that he sholde euer be the better / The crane herked after this grete rewarde and put his heed in to his throte and brought out the boon wyth his bylle /

The wulf sterte a syde wyth the pluckyng / and cryde out alas thou doost me harme / but I forgyue it the[e] / doo no more soo / I wolde not suffre it of an other /

The crane saide / Sir Isegrym goo and be mery for ye be al hool now gyue to me that ye promysed

The wulf saide / wyl ye here what he sayth / I am he that hath suffred and haue cause to playne / and he wille haue good of me / he thanketh not me of the kyndnes that I dyde to hym he put his heed in my mouth / and I suffred hym to drawe it out hole without hurtyng / And he dyde to me also harme / And yf ony hier shold haue a reward it shold be I by ryght /

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Thus the vnkynde men now adayes rewarde them that doo them good / whan the false and subtyl aryse and become grete / thenne goth worship and prouffyt al to nought / Ther ben many of right that ought reward and doo good to suche as haue holpen hem in her nede / that now fynde causes and saye they be hurte and wolde haue amendis / where they ought to rewarde and make amendes them self / Therfore it is said and trowthe it is / whoo that wyl chyde or chastyse / see that he be clere hym self.

Alle this and moche more than I now can wel remembre was made and wrought in this glasse / The maister that ordeyned it / was aconnyng man and a profounde clerk in many sciencis / And by cause thise Iewells were ouer good and precious for me to kepe and haue / Therfore I sente them to my dere lord the kynge and to the quene in presente / Where ben they now that gyue to theyr lordes suche presentes / The sorowe that my ij chyldren made whan I sente away the glasse was grete for they were woned to loke therin and see them self how theyr clothyng and araye bycam them on their bodyes / O alas I knewe not that kywart the hare was so nyghe his deth whan I delyueryd hym the male with this iewellis / I wiste not to whom I myght better haue taken them. though It shold haue coste me my lyf. than hym and bellart the ramme / They were two of my best frendis / Oute alas I crye vpon the murderar / I shal knowe who it was. though I shold renne thurgh al the world to seke hym. ffor murdre abydeth not hyd. it shal come out perauenture he is in this companye that knoweth where kywart is bicomen. though he telleth it not. ffor many false shrewys walke wyth good men. fro whom noman can kepe hym· they knowen theyr craft so wel and can wel couere their falsenes. but the most wondre that I haue is that my lord the kyng hier saith so felly. that my fadre nor I dyde hym neuer good / that thynketh me / meruayl of a kynge / but ther come so many thyngis to fore hym that he forgeteth that one wyth that other / and so faryth by me / Dere lorde remembre not ye whan my lord your fadre lyuyd / and ye an yonglyng of two yere were that my fadre cam fro skole fro Monpellier / where as he had fyue yere studyed in receptes of medycynes / he knewe al the tokenes of the vryne as wel as his honde / And also alle the

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herbes and nature of them whiche were viscose or laxatyf / he was a synguler maister in that science / he myght wel were cloth of sylke and a gylt gyrdle / whan he cam to court he fonde the kynge in a grete sekenes / wherof he was sory in his hert / For he louyd hym aboue alle other lordes / The kynge wold not forgoo hym / ffor whan he cam alle other had leue to walke where they wold he trusted none so moche as hym /

he said reynard I am seke and fele me the lenger the werse /

My fadre said / my dere lord here is an vrynal / make youre water therin and assone as I may see it I shal telle what sekenes it is and also how ye shal be holpen /

the kynge dyde as he conseilled hym for he trusted noman better that lyuyd / Though so were that my fader dyde not as he shold haue don to you / But that was by counseyl of euyl and foule beestis I had wonder therof / but it was a rasyng ayenst his deth / he sayd my lord yf ye wyl be hole / Ye muste ete the lyuer of a wulf of vij yere old / that may ye not leue / or ellis ye shal deye / for your vryne sheweth it playnly /

the wulf stode ther by and said nought /

But the kynge said to hym sir ysegrym now ye here wel that I muste haue your lyuer / yf I wil be hool /

Tho answerd the wulf and saide / Nay my lord not soo / I wote wel I am not yet fyue yere olde / I haue herde my moder saie soo /

My fadre sayd / what skylleth this wordes / late hym be opened and I shal knowe by the lyuer yf it be good for yow or not /

And therwyth the wulf was had to kychen / and his lyuer taken out / whiche the kynge ete and was anon al hole of alle his sekenes / thenne thanketh he my fadre moche / and commanded alle his houshold upon their lyuys that after that tyme they shold calle hym mayster reynard

THE abode stylle by the kynge and was byleuid of alle thyngis / and muste allewey go by his syde / And the kynge gaf to hym a garlond of rooses. whiche he muste alway were on his heed. but now this is al torned· Alle the old good thinges that he dyde. ben forgeten· And thise couetouse and rauenous shrewys ben taken vp and sette

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on the hye benche and ben herde and made grete. And the wyse folke ben put a back. by whiche thise lordes ofte lacke. And cause them to be in moche trouble and sorowe ffor whan a couetous man of lowe byrthe is made a lorde· and is moche greet and aboue his neyghbours hath power and myght/ Thenne he knoweth not hym self/ne whens he is comen And hath no pyte on nomans hurte. ne hereth nomans requeste. but yf he may haue grete yeftis. al his entent and desyre is to gadre good and to be gretter. O how many couetous men ben now in lordes courtes. they flatre and smeke/and plese the prynce for theyr synguler auayl/But and the prynce had nede of them or their good they sholde rather suffre hym to deye or fare right hard er they wold gyue or lene hym/They be lyke the wulf/that had leuer the kinge had deyed than he wolde gyue hym his lyuer/Yet had I leuer er that the kynge or the quene shold fare amys/that xx suche wulues shold lose theyr lyues/hit were also the leest losse/My lorde al this bitelle in your yougthe that my fader dyde thus/I trowe ye haue forgoten it/

And also I haue my self don yow reuerence worship and courtosye/Vnroused be it/thaugh ye now thanke me but lytyl/but parauenture ye remembred not that I shal now saye/not to ony forwyttyng of yow/for ye be worthy alle worship and reuerence that ony man can doo/that haue ye of almyghty god by enheritaunce of your noble progenytours/ wherfor I your humble subgette and seruaunt am bounden to doo to yow alle the seruyse that I can or maye/I cam on a tyme walkyng with the wulfe Isegrym/And we hadde goten vnder vs bothe a swyne/And for his lowde cryyng we bote hym to deth/and syre ye cam fro ferre out of a groue ayenst vs. ye salewed vs frendly and saide we were welcome. and that ye and my lady the quene whiche cam after yow hadde grete hongre. and had nothyng for to ete/and prayd vs for to gyue yow parte of our wynnyng/Isegrym spack so softe that a man vnnethe myght here hym. but I spack out and saide. ye[a] my lord with a good will. though it were more we wil wel that ye haue parte And thenne the wulf departed as he was wont to doo/departed and toke that on half for hym self/And he gaf yow a quarter. ffor yow and for the quene/ That other quarter he ete and bote as hastely as he myghte/ bicause he wolde ete it allone/And he gaf to me but half the longes that I pray god that euyl mote he fare.

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THus shewde he his condicions and nature/ er men shold haue songen a Credo ye my lord had eten your part/And yet wold ye fayn haue had more/ffor ye were not ful/ And bicause he gaf yow no more ne profred yow/Ye lyft vp your right fote and smote hym bytwene the eris that ye tare his skynne ouer his eyen/and tho he myght no lengre abyde but he bledde/howled and ran away and lefte his part there lye / Tho said ye to hym haste yow agayn hether and brynge to vs more/And here after see better to how ye dele and parte/Thenne saide I my lord yf it please yow I wylle goo wyth hym/I wote wel what ye saide/I wente wyth hym/he bledde/and groned as sore as he was al softly/he durst not crye lowde/we wente so ferre. that we brought a calf/And whan ye saw vs come therwyth/ ye lawhyd for ye were wel plesyd/ye said to me that I was swyft in hontyng· I see wel that ye can fynde wel whan ye take it vpon yow/ye be good to sende forth in a nede/The calf is good and fatte. herof shal ye be the delar I saide my lord wyth a good wyl/The one half my lord shal be for yow. And that other half for my lady the quene. the moghettis. Lyuer longes and the Inward shal be for your chyldren/the hed shal Isegrym the wulf haue/and I wil haue the feet· Tho said ye Reynart who hath taught you to departe so courtoisly/my lord said I. that hath don this preest that sytteth her with the bloody crowne/he lost his skynne wyth the vncourtoys departyng of the swyn. And for his couetyse and rauyne he hath hurte and shame

Alas ther ben many wulues now a dayes that without right and reson destroye and ete them that they may haue the ouerhand of / they spare neyther flesh ne blood/frende ne enemye/what they can gete· that take they/O woo be to that lande and to townes· where as the wulues haue the ouerhand/

My lord this and many other good thing haue I don for you/that I cowde wel telle yf it were not to[o] long/of whiche now ye remembre litil by the wordes that I her of yow. yf ye wold al thyng ouersee wel/ye wold not saye as ye doo· I haue seen the day/that ther shold no grete mater be concluded in this court without myn aduyse/al be yt that this auenture is now fallen/It myght happen yet that my wordes shal be herd and also bileuyd as wel as an others as ferre as right wyl for I desyre none other/ffor yf ther be ony can saye and make

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good by suffycient witnessis that I haue trespaced I wil abyd al the right and lawe that may come therof· and yf ony saie on me ony thyng of whiche he can brynge no wytnesses. Let me thenne be rewlyd after the lawe and custome of thys court

the kynge saide Reynart ye saye resonably I knowe not of kywarts deth more than that bellyn the Ramme brought his heed hether In the male / therof I lete yow goo quyte· ffor I haue no wytnes therof /

My dere lord said [Reynart] god thanke yow / sykerly ye doo wel for his deth maketh me so sorowful / that me thynketh my herte wyl breke in two / o whan they departed fro me myn herte was so heuy / that me thought I shold haue swowned / I wote wel it was a token of the losse that tho was so nyghe comyng to me /

ALle the moost parte of them that were there and herde the foxes wordes of the Iewellis and how he made his contenance and stratchid hym / had veryly supposed that it had not be fayned but that it had be tryewe. they were sory of his losse and mysauenture. and also of his sorowe· The kynge and the quene had bothe pyte of hym. And bad hym to make not to[o] moche sorowe / But that he sholde endeuore hym to seche hem. For he had so moche preysed hem. that they had grete wyl and desyre to haue them / And by cause he had made them to vnderstonde that he had sente these Iewellis to them. though they neuer had them· yet they thankyd hym. And prayd hym to helpe that they myght haue them.

THe foxe vnderstode theyr menyng wel. he thought toward them but lytyl good for al that· he said god thanke you my lord and my lady that ye so frendly comforte me in my sorow. I shal not reste nyght ne day ne alle they that wyl doo ony thyng for me but Renne and praye / Thretene and aske alle the four corners of the world / Thaugh I shold euer seche tyl that I knowe where they ben bicomen / and I pray you my lord the kynge / That yf they were in suche place as I cowde not gete them by prayer / by myght ne by request that ye wold assiste me and abide by me / ffor it towcheth your self / and the good is youris / And also it is your part to doo Iustyse on thefte and murdre whiche bothe ben in this caas /

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Reynart said the kynge that shal I not leue whan ye knowe wher they ben / Myn helpe shalbe alway redy for you /

O dere lorde this is to[o] moche presented to me / yf I had power and myght I sholde deserue ayenst yow /

Now hath the foxe his mater fast and fayr / ffor he hath the kynge in his hand as he wold / hym thought that he was in better caas than it was lyke to haue be / he hath made so many lesynges / that he may goo frely wher he wyl without complaynyng of ony of them alle /

Sauf of Isegrym which was to hymward angry and dysplesyd and saide / O noble kynge ar ye so moche chyldyssh that ye byleue this false and subtyl shrewe / and suffre your self wyth false lyes thus to be deceyuyd / Of fayth it shold be longe or I sholde byleue hym / he is in murdre and treson al be wrapped / And he mocketh you to tore your visage / I shal telle hym a nother tale I am glad that I see now hym here / al his lesynges shal not a vaylle hym er he departe fro me.

How ysegrym the wulf complayned agayn on the fore. capitulo xxxiij°

MY lord I pray you to take hede / this false theef betraied my wyf ones fowle and dishonestly / hit was so that in a wynters day that they wente to gyder thurgh a grete water / and he bare / my wyf an honde that he wold teche her take fysshe wyth her tayl / and that she shold late it hange in the water a good while and ther shold so moche fysshe cleue on it that foure of them shold not conne ete it. The fool my wyf supposed he had said trouthe / And she wente in the myre to the bely to[o] er she cam in to the water / And whan she was in the deppest of the water. he bad her holde her tayl / til that the fysshe were comen. she helde her tayl so longe that it was frorn harde in the yse and coude not plucke it out / And whan he sawe that. he sprange vp after on her body. Alas there rauysshyd he and forcyd my wyf so knauisshly that I am ashamed to telle it. she coude not defende her self the sely beest· she stode so depe in the myre. herof he can not saye naye. ffor I fonde hym with the dede. for as I wente aboue vpon the banke I sawe hym bynethe vpon my wyf shouyng and stekyng as men doo whan

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they doo suche werke and playe. Alas what payne suffred I tho at my herte I had almost for sorow lost my fyue wyttes and cryde as lowde as I myght reynart what do ye there / and whan he sawe me so nyghe tho leep he of[f]. and wente his waye. I wente to her in a grete heuinesse. And wente depe in that myre and that water.er I coude breke the yse and moche payne suffred she er she coude haue out her taylle / and yet lefte a gobet of her tayle behynd her / And we were lyke bothe therby to haue lost our lyues / for she galped and cryde so lowde for the smarte that she had er she cam out / that the men of the village cam out with stauys and byllis / with flaylis and pykforkes / And the wyuis wyth theyr distauis / and cryed dyspytously sle sle / and smyte doun right / I was neuer in my lyf so aferde / ffor vnnethe we escape / we ran so fast that we swette ther was a vylayne that stake on vs wyth a pyke / whiche hurted vs sore he was stronge and swyfte a fote / hadde it not be nyght / Certaynly we had ben slayn / The fowle olde que[a]nes wold fayne haue beten vs / they saide that we had byten theyr sheep / They cursed vs with many a curse / Tho cam we in a felde ful of brome and brembles there hydde we vs fro the vylaynes / And they durst not folowe vs ferther by nyght / but retorned home agayn See my lorde thys fowle mater / this is murdre / rape / and treson / whiche ye ought to doo Iustyce theron sharply.

REynard answerd and said / yf this were trewe / it shold go to[o] nyghe myn honour and worship / god forbede that it shold be founde trewe / hit is wel trewe that I taught her how she [s]holde in a place catche fysshe / and shewde her a good way for to goo ouer in to the water without goyng in to the myre / But she ranne so desyrously whan she herde me name the fyssh / That she nether way ne path helde / But wente in to the yse wherein she was forfrorn / And that was by cause she abode to[o] longe she had fissh ynough yf she coude haue be plesyd wyth mesure it falleth ofte / who that wold haue all / leseth alle / Ouer couetous was neuer good / For the beest can not be satisfyed / And whan I sawe her in the yse so faste / I wente to haue holpen her / and heef and shoef and stack here and there to haue brought her out / But it was al payne loste / ffor she was to[o] heuy for me / Tho cam ysegrym and sawe how I shoef and stack and dyde al my

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beste and he as a fowle chorle· fowle and rybadously sklaundryth me wyth her. as thyse fowle vnthriftes ben wonte to doo· But my dere lord it was none otherwyse. he belyeth me falsely parauenture his eyen daselyd as he loked from aboue doun. he cryde and cursed me and swore many an oth I shold dere aby[d]e it / whan I herde hym so curse and thretene / I wente my waye / and lete hym curse and menace til he was wery / And tho wente he and heef and shoef and halpe his wyf out / and thenne he leep and ran and she also for to gete them an hete and to warme them / or ellis they shold haue deyed for colde / And what someuer I haue saide a fore or after / that is clerely al trouthe / I wolde not for a thousand marke of fyn gold lye to yow one lesyng it were not fyttyng for me / what someuer falle of me I shal saye the trouthe / lyke as myn elders haue alway don / syth the tyme that we fyrst vnderstode reson / and yf ye be in doubte of ony thynge that I haue said otherwyse than trouth / gyue me respyte of viij dayes that I may haue counseyl / and I shal brynge suche Informacion wyth good tryew and suffycient recorde / that ye shal alle your lyf duryng truste and byleue me / and so shal all your counseyl also / what haue I to doo wyth the wulf / hit is to fore clerly ynowh shewde that he is a foule vylaynous kaytyf / and an vnclene beest / Whan he deled and departed the swyn / So is it now knowen to you alle by hys owen wordes that is a deffamer of wymmen as moche as in hym is ye may wel marke euerychone / Who shold luste to do that game to one so stedfast a wyf beyng in so grete peryll of deth now aske ye hys wyf / yf it be so as he sayth / yf she wyl saye the trouthe I wote wel / she shal saye as I doo /

Tho spack erswynde the wulfis wyf / Ache felle reynart / noman can kepe hym self fro the[e] / thou canst so wel vttre thy wordes and thy falsenes and reson sette forth / but it shall be euyl rewarded in the ende / How broughtest thou me ones in to the welle where the two bokettys henge by one corde rennyng thurgh one polley whiche wente one vp and another doun / thou sattest in that one boket bynethe in the pytte in grete drede / I cam theder and herde the[e] syghe and make sorowe / And axed the[e] how thou camest there / thou saidest that thou haddest there so many good fysshes eten out of the water that thy bely wolde breste / I said telle me how I shal come to

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the[e]/Thenne saidest thou aunte sprynge in to that boket that hangeth there/and ye shal come anon to me/I dyde so/and I wente dounward/and ye cam vpward tho was I alle angry/ thou saidest thus fareth the world that one goth vp/and another goth doun/tho sprang ye forth and wente your waye and I abode there allone syttyng an hole day sore an hongryd and a colde/And therto had I many a stroke er I coude gete thens/

Aunte sayd the foxe/thaugh the strokes dyde you harme I had leuer ye had them than I/ffor ye may better bere them/ for one of vs must nedes haue had them/I taught yow good/ wyl ye vnderstande it and thynke on it/that ye another tyme take better hede and bileue noman ouer hastely/is he frende or cosyn/for euery man seketh his owne prouffyt/They be now fooles that do not soo/And specyally whan they be in Ieopardye of theyr lyues.

A fayr parable of the foxe and the wulf. Ca° xxxiiij°

MY lord said dame Erswyn I pray yow here how he can blowe with alle wyndes/And how fayr bryngeth he his maters forth/

Thus hath he brought me many tyme in scathe and hurte said the wulf/he hath ones bytrayed me to the she ape myn aunte/where I was in grete drede and fere/for I lefte there almost myn one ere/yf the foxe wil telle it how it byfel/I wyl gyue hym the fordele therof/for I can not telle it so wel/but he shal beryspe me/

wel said the foxe I shal telle it wythout stameryng I shal saye the trouth/I praye yow herken me/he cam in to the wode and complayned to me/that he had grete hongre ffor I sawe hym neuer so ful/but he wold alway haue had fayn more/I haue wonder where the mete becometh that he destroyeth/I see now on his contenance that he begynneth to grymme for hongre/Whan I herde hym so complayne I had pyte of hym/And I saide I was also hongry/thenne wente we half a day to gydre and fond nothyng/tho whyned he and cryed/and said he myght goo no ferther Thenne espyed I a grete hool standyng in the myddys vnder an hawe whiche was thyck of brembles/and I herde a russhyng

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therin I wist not what it was / thenne said I goo therin and loke yf ther be ony thyng ther for vs / I wote wel ther is somwhat / tho saide he cosyn I wolde not crepe in to that hole for twenty pound but I wist fyrst what is therin / me thynketh that ther is some perylous thyng but I shal abyde here vnder this tree / yf ye wil goo therin to fore / but come anon agayn / And late me wete what thyng is therin / Ye can many a subtylte and can wel helpe your self and moche better than I. See my lord the kynge / Thus he made me poure wight to goo to fore in to the daunger / and he whiche is grete longe and stronge abode withoute and rested hym in pees / awayte yf I dyde not for hym there.

Wold not suffre the drede and fere that I there suffred for al the good in erthe / but yf I wyste how to escape / I wente hardyly in / I fonde the way derke / longe and brood / Er I right in the hool cam soo espyed I a grete light whiche cam in fro that one syde ther laye in a grete ape with tweyne grete wyde eyen / and they glymmed as a fyre / And she had a grete mouth with longe teeth and sharp naylles on hir feet and on hir handes / I wende hit had be a mermoyse / a baubyn or a mercatte / for I sawe neuer fowler beest / and by her laye thre of her children whiche were right fowle ffor they were ryght lyke the moder / whan they sawe me come / they gapeden wyde on me and were al stylle / I was aferd / And wold wel I had ben thens / but I thoughte I am therin / I muste ther thurgh and come out as wel as I maye / as I sawe her me thought she semed more than ysegrym the wulf / And her chyldren were more than I / I sawe neuer a fowler meyne / they laye on fowle heye whiche was al be pyssed / They were byslabbed and byclagged to their eres to[o] in her owen donge / hit stanke that I was almost smoldred therof I durst not saye but good / and thenne I saide / Aunte god gyue yow good daye and alle my cosyns your fayr chyldren / they be of theyr age the fayrest that euer I sawe O lord god how wel plese they me / how louely / how fayr ben they eche of them for their beaute myght be a grete kyngis sone / Of right we ought to thanke yow / that ye thus encrece oure lygnage / Dere aunte whan I herde saye that ye were delyuered and leyd doun I coude no lenger abyde but muste come and frendly vysite yow / I am sory that I had not erst knowen it /

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Reynard cosyn said she ye be welcome / ffor that ye haue found me and thus come see me I thanke yow. Dere cosyn ye be right trewe and named right wyse in alle londes / and also that ye gladly furthre and brynge your lignage in grete worship / Ye muste teche my chyldren with the youris som wysedom that they may knowe what they shal doo and leue / I haue thought on yow / for gladly ye goo and felawship with the good /

O how wel was I plesyd whan I herde thise wordes / this deseruyd I at the begynnyng whan I callyd her aunte / how be it that she was nothyng sybbe to me / ffor my right aunte is dame rukenawe that yonder standeth / Whiche is woned to brynge forth wyse chyldren /

I saide aunte my lyf and my good is at your commandement / and what I may doo for yow by nyght and by daye / I wylle gladly teche them alle that I can.

I wolde fayn haue be thens for the stenche of them. and also I had pyte of the grete hongre that Isegrym had.

I saide aunte I shal commytte yow and your fayr chyldren to god and take my leue / My wyf shal thynke longe after me /

Dere cosyn saide she ye shal not departe til ye haue eten / for yf ye dyde I wold saie ye were not kynde /

Tho stode she vp and brought me in an other hool where as was moche mete of hertes and hyndes / roes / fesaunts / partrychs and moche other venyson that I wondred for whens al this mete myghte come / And whan I had eten my bely ful she gaf me a grete pece of an hynde fro to ete wyth my wyf and wyth my houshold / whan I come home / I was a shamed to take it / But I myght none other wyse doo / I thankyd her and toke my leue / she bad me I shold come sone agayn / I sayd I wolde

And so departed thens meryly / that I so wel had spedde / I hasted me out / and whan I cam and sawe ysegrym whiche laye gronyng. And I axed hym how he ferde / he said neuew al euyll· ffor it is wonder that I lyue / brynge ye ony mete to ete I deye for hongre. tho had I compassion of hym and gaf hym that I had. And saued hym there his lyf· wherof thenne thanked me gretly. how be it that he now oweth me euyl wyl.

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HE had eten this vp anon. tho said he Reynard dere cosyn what fonde ye in that hoel. I am more hongry now than I was to fore / my teeth ben now sharped to ete.

I saide thenne / Eme haste yow thenne lyghtly into that hool. Ye shal fynde there ynough. there lieth myn aunte wyth her chyldren· yf ye wyl spare the trouth and lye grete lesynges / ye shal haue there al your desire / But and ye saye trouth / ye shal take harme /

My lord was not this ynough sayd and warned / who so wold vnderstonde it / that al that he fonde he shold saye the contrarye But rude and plompe beestis can not vnderstonde wysedom / therfore hate they alle subtyl Inuencions / ffor they can not conceyue them. Yet neuertheles / he saide he wolde goo Inne / and lye so many lesyngis er he sholde myshappe that all man sholde haue wondre of it. and so wente forth in to that fowle stynkyng hool. and fonde the marmosette. She was lyke the deuyls doughter. and on her chyldren hynge moche fylth cloterd in gobettis.

Tho cryde he alas me growleth of thyse fowle nyckers / Come they out of helle. men may make deuylles a ferd of hem. goo and drowne them that euyl mote they fare· I sawe neuer fowler wormes. they make al myn heer to stande right vp /

sir ysegrym said she. what may I doo therto. they ben my chyldren. And I muste be their moder. what lyeth that in your weye· whether they be fowl or fayr. They haue yow nothyng coste. here hath ben one to day byfore yow whiche was to them ny[g]he of kyn. And was your better and wyser and he sayde that they ware fayr. who hath sente yow hyther with thyse tydynges.

dame wyl ye wytte I wylle ete of your mete. hit is better bestowed on me than on thyse fowle wyghtes.

She sayde hier is no mete /

he saide here is ynough.

And ther wyth he sterte with his hede toward the mete. and wolde haue goon in to the hool wher the mete was. But myn aunte sterte vp wyth her chyldren. and ronne to hym wyth their sharp longe nayles so sore that the blode ran ouer his eyen / I herde hym crye sore and howle /

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but I knowe of no defence that he made / but that he ran faste out of the hool / And he was there cratched and byten / and many an hool had they made in his cote and skyn / his visage was alle on a blood / and almost he had loste his one ere / he groned and complayned to me sore /

thenne asked I hym yf he had wel lyed

he sayd I saide lyke as I sawe and fonde / and that was a fowle bytche wyth many fowle wyghtis /

Nay eme said I / ye shold haue said / Fayr nece how fare ye and your fair chyldren whiche ben my welbelouid cosyns /

the wulf sayd / I had leuer that they were hanged er I that saide /

ye eme therfore muste ye resseyue suche maner payment / hit is better otherwhile to lye than to saye trouthe / They that ben better / wyser and strenger than we be haue doon so to fore vs /

See my lord the kyng thus gate he his rede coyf / Now stondeth he al so symply as he knewe no harme / I pray yow aske ye hym yf it was not thus / he was not fer of yf I wote it wel·

How ysegrym proferd his gloue to the fore for to fyght wyth hym· capitulo xxxv°.

THe wulf sayd I may wel forbere your mockes and your scornes and also your felle venymous wordes strong theef that ye ar / ye saide that I was almost dede for hungre / when ye helpe me in my nede / that is falsely lyed. for it was but aboon that ye gaf to me / ye had eten away alle the flessh that was theron / And ye mocke me and saye that I am hongry here where I stande / that toucheth my worship to[o] nygh / what many a spyty worde haue ye brought forth wyth false lesyngis / And that I haue conspyred the kynges deth fro the tresour that ye haue seid to hym / is in hulsterlo / And ye haue also my wyf shamed and sklandred / that she shal neuer recoure it / and I shold euer be disworshipped therby yf I auengyd it not / I haue forborn yow longe / but now ye shal not escape me / I can not make her of greet preef / But I saye here to fore my lord and to fore alle them that ben here that thow art a false

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traytour and a morderar / And that shal I proue and make good on thy body wythin lystes in the felde. and that body ayenst body And thenne shal our stryf haue an ende / And therto I caste to the[e] my gloue / and take thou it vp / I shal haue right of the[e] or deye therfore /

Reynard the foxe thought how come I on this Campyng / we ben not bothe lyke / I shal not wel conne stonde ayenst this stronge theef / all my proof is now come to an ende.

How the foxe took vp the gloue. And how the kynge sette to them daye and felde for to come and doo theyr bataylle capitulo xxxvj°

YEt thought the foxe I haue good auauntage. the clawes of his for feet ben of[f]. and his feet ben yet sore therof. whan for my sake he was vnshoed. he shal be somwhat the weyker.

Thenne sayde the foxe who that saith that I am a traytour or a morderar. I saie he lieth falsely and that art thou specyally ysegrym / thou bryngest me / there as I wolde be / this haue I ofte desyred / lo here is my plegge / that alle thy wordes ben falls / And that I shal defende me / and made good that thou lyest /

The kynge receyuyd the plegges / and amytted the bateyll And asked borowes of them bothe / that on the morn they shold come and performe theyr batayll / and doo as they ought to doo / Thenne the bere and the catte were borowes for the wulf / And for the foxe were borowys grymbert the dasse / and byteluys·

How rukenawe the she ape counseylled the foxe how he sholde byhaue hym in the felde ayenst the wulf Capitulo xxxvij°

THe she ape saide to the foxe / Reyner neuew / See that ye take hede in your batayll / be colde and wyse Your eme taught me ones a prayer that is of moche vertue to hym that shal fyghte / And a grete maister

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and a wyse clerk. and was abbot of boudelo that taughted hym / he saide who that sayde deuoutly this prayer fastyng shal not that day be ouercomen in batayl ne in fyghting therfore dere neuew be not aferd / I shal rede it ouer yow to morow / thenne may ye be sure ynough of the wulf hit is bettre to fyghte / than to haue the necke asondre /

I thanke you dere aunte said the foxe / The quarel that I haue is rightful therfore I hope I shal spede wel / and that shal gretely be myne helpe /

Alle his lygnage abode by hym al the nyght / and helpe hym to dryue a way the tyme /

Dame rukenawe the she ape his aunte thoughte alway on his prouffyt and fordele / And she dyde alle his heer fro the heed to the tayl be shorn of[f] smothe / and she anoynted alle his body wyth oyl of olyue / And thenne was his body also glat and slyper / that the wulf sholde haue none holde on hym / And he was round and fatte also on his body /

And she said to hym dere cosyn ye muste now drynke moche / that to morowe ye may the better make your vryne / but ye shal holde it in tyl ye come to the felde / And whan nede is and tyme / so shall ye pysse ful your rowhe tayll / and smyte the wulf therwyth in his berde / And yf ye myght hytte hym therwyth in his eyen· thenne shal ye byneme hym his syght / that shold moche hyndre hym / but ellis hold alway your tayl faste bytwene your legges that he catche yow not therby / and holde doun your eris lyeng plat after your heed / that he holde you not therby / And see wisely to your self / and at begynnyng flee fro his strokes. And late hym sprynge and renne after yow / and renne to fore where as moste dust is / and styre it wyth your feet that it may flee in his eyen and that shal moche hyndre his syght / And whyle he rubbeth his eyen take your auantage and smyte and byte hym there as ye may most hurte hym / And alleway to hytte hym wyth your tayll ful of pysse in his visage and that shal make hym so woo / that he shal not wyte where he is / And late hym renne after yow for to make hym wery / Yet his feet ben sore / of that ye made hym to lose his shooes / and though he be greet / he hath no herte / Neuew certaynly this is my counseyll.

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THe connyng goth to fore strengthe / therfore see for your self / And sette your self wysely atte defence / that ye and we alle may haue worship therof / I wold be sory yf ye mys[s]happed / I shal teche you the wordes that your eme mertyn taught me / that ye may ouercome your enemye / as I hope ye shal doo wythout doubte /

therwyth she leyde her hand vpon his heed and saide these wordes / Blaerde Shay Alphenio / Kasbue Gorfons alsbuifrio / Neuew now be ye sure fro alle myschief and drede / and counseyle yow that ye reste you a lytyl / for it is by the daye / ye shal be the better dysposed / we shal awake you in al in tyme /

aunte said the foxe I am now glad / god thanke you ye haue don to me suche good / I can neuer deserue it fully agayn / me thynketh ther may no thynge hurte me syth that ye haue said thyse holy wordes ouer me /

Tho wente he and leyd hym doun vnder a tre in the grasse and slepte tyl the sonne was rysen / tho cam the otter and waked hym and bad hym aryse / and gaf hym a good yong doke / and said / dere cosyn I haue this nyght made many a leep in the water er I coude gete this yonge fatte doke / I haue taken it fro a fowler / take and ete it /

Reynart sayde this is good hansele / yf I refused I were a fool / I thanke yow cosyn that ye remembre me / yf I lyue I shal rewarde yow /

The foxe ete the doke with oute sawce or breed it sauourd hym wel and wente wel in / And he dranke therto iiij grete draughtis of water / Thenne wente he to the bataylle ward and alle they that louyd hym wente wyth hym.

How the foxe cam in to the felde and how they foughten / capitulo xxxviij°

THan the kynge sawe reynart thus shorn and oyled he said to hym / Ey foxe how wel can ye see for your self /

he wondred therof he was fowle to loke on /

but the foxe said not one worde but kneled doun lowe to th[e]erthe vnto the kynge and to the quene and stryked hym forth in to the felde /

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The wulf was ther redy and spack many a proud word / the rulers and kepars of the felde was the lupaert and the losse / they brought forth the booke / on whiche sware the wulf that the foxe was a traytour and a morderar / and none myght be falser than he was / and that he wolde preue on his body and make it good / Reynart the foxe sware that he lyed as a false knaue and a cursyd theef and that he wold doo good on his body /

Whan this was don the gouernours of the felde / bad them doo theyr deuoyr / Thenne romed they alle the felde sauf dame rukenawe the she ape / she abode by the foxe and bad hym remembre wel the wordes that she had sayd to hym / she said see wel too / whan ye were vij yer olde ye were wyse ynowh to goo by nyght wythout lanterne / or mone shyne / Where ye wyste to wynne ony goode / ye ben named emong the peple wyse and subtyl / payne your self to werke soo that ye wynne the prys / thenne may ye haue euer honour. and worship / and al we that ben your frendys /

he answerd my derest aunte I knowe it wel / I shal doo my beste and thynke on your counseyl / I hope so to doo that alle my lignage shal haue worship therby / and myn enemyes shame and confusion /

she sayde god graunte it yow.

How the foxe and the wulf foughten to gydre ca° xxxix°

THerwyth she wente out of the felde / and lete them tweyne goo to gydre / the wulf trade forth to the foxe in grete wrath and opened his fore feet / and supposed to haue taken the foxe in hem / But the foxe sprang from hym lyghtly / For he was lyghter to fote than he / The wulf sprange after and hunted the foxe sore / theyr frendes stode / withoute the lystes and loked vpon hem / The wulf stode wyder than reynard dyde and ofte ouertoke hym / And lyfte vp his foot and wende to haue smyten hym / but the foxe sawe to / and smote hym wyth his rowhe tayle / Whiche he had al be pyssed in his visage / tho wende the wulf to haue ben plat blynde / the pysse sterte in his eyen / thenne muste he reste for to make clene his eyen / Reyner thoughte on his

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fordele and stode aboue the wynde skrabbing and casting wyth his feet the duste that it flewe the wulfis eyen ful / the wulf was sore blynded ther wyth in suche wyse that he muste leue the rennyng after hym / ffor the sonde and pysse cleuyd vnder his eyen that it smerted so sore / that he muste rubbe and washe it a way /

Tho cam reyner in a grete angre and bote hym thre grete woundes on his heed wyth his teeth / and said / what is that syr wulf / hath one there byten yow / how is it wyth yow / I wyl al otherwyse on yow yet / abyde I shal brynge yow somm newe thyng / ye haue stole many a lambe and destroyed many a symple beest / and now falsely haue appeled me and brought me in this trouble / al this shal I now auenge on the[e] / I am chosen to reward the[e] for thyn old synnes ffor god wyl no lenger suffre the[e] in thy grete rauayn and shrewdnes / I shal now assoylle the[e] and that shal be good for thy sowle take paciently this penannce / for thou shalt lyue no lenger / the helle shal be thy purgatorye / Thy lyf is now in my mercy / but and yf thou wilt knele doun and aske me forgyfnes / and knowleche the[e] to be ouercomen / yet though thou be euyl / yet I wyl spare the[e] / for my conscience counseylleth me / I shold not gladly slee no man /

Isegrym wende wyth thyse mockyng and spytous wordes to haue goon out of his wytte / And that dered hym so moche that he wyste not what to saye buff ne haff / he was so angry in his herte / The woundes that reynart had gyuen hym bledde and smarted sore / And he thought how he myghte best auenge it.

WYth grete angre he lyft vp his foot and smote the foxe on the heed so grete a stroke / that he fyl to the ground / tho sterte the wulf to[o] and wende to haue take hym / but the foxe was lyght and wyly and roose lyghtly vp and mette wyth hym fiersly and there began a felle bataylle whiche dured longe / the wulf had grete spyte on the foxe as it wel semed / he sprange after hym x tymes eche after other / and wold fayn haue had hym faste / but his skyn was so slyper and fatte of the oyle that alway he escaped fro hym O so subtyl and snelle was the foxe / that many tymes whan the wulf wende wel to be sure of hym / he sterte thenne bytwene his legges and vnder his bely and thenne torned he agayn and

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gaf the wulf a stroke wyth his tail ful of pysse in his eyen that Isegrym wende he sholde haue loste his syght / and this dyde he often tymes / And alwey whan he had so smyten hym thenne wolde he goo aboue the wynde and reyse the duste / that it made his eyen ful of stufs / Isegrym was woo begon / and thought he was at an afterdele / yet was his strengthe and myght moche more than the foxes / Reynard had many a sore stroke of hym / whan he raught hym / They gaf eche other many a stroke and many a byte whan they saw theyr auauntage / And eche of hem dyde his best to destroye that other / I wold I myght see suche abaytaylle / that one was wyly / and that other was stronge / that one faught wyth strengthe / and that other with subtylte.

THe wulf was angry that the foxe endured so longe ayenst hym yf his formest feet had ben hole / the foxe had not endured so longe / but the sores were so open that he myght not wel renne / And the foxe myght better of[f] and on than he / And also he swange his tayl wyth pysse ofte vnder his eyen / and made hym that hym thoughte that his eyen shold goo out /

Atte laste he sayd to hym self / I wyl make an ende of this bataylle / How longe shal this caytyf dure thus ayenst me / I am so grete / I shold yf I laye vpon hym presse hym to deth / hit is to me a grete shame that I spare hym so longe / Men shal mocke and poynte me wyth fyngres to my shame and rebuke for I am yet on the werst syde / I am sore wounded / I blede sore / and he drowneth me / wyth his pysse / and caste so moche dust and sande in myne eyen / that hastely I shal not conne see / yf I suffre hym ony lenger / I wyl sette it in auenture / and seen what shal come therof /

wyth that he smote wyth his foot reynard on the heed that he fyll doun to the ground And er he cowde aryse he caught hym in his feet· and laye vpon hym as he wold haue pressed hym to deth. Tho began the foxe to be a ferd. and so were alle his frendis whan they sawe hym lye vnder· And on that other syde alle ysegryms frendes were ioyeful and glad. The foxe defended hym faste wyth his clawes as he laye vpward wyth his feet· And gaf hym many a clope· The wulf durste not wyth his feet doo hym moche harme but wyth his teeth snatched at hym as he wold haue

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byten hym. whan the foxe sawe that he shold be byten and was in grete drede. he smote the wulf in the heed wyth his formest clawes and tare the skynne of[f] bytwene his browes and hys eeres. and that one of his eyen henge out. Whiche dyde hym moche payne· he howlyd. he wepte· he cryde lowde. and made a pyteuous noyse for the blode rann doun as it had ben a streme

How the foxe beyng vnder the wulf· wyth flateryng wordes glosed hym. that the foxe cam to his aboue agayn. capitulo xl°

THe wulf wyped his eyen. the foxe was glad whan he sawe that / he wrastled so sore / that he sprang on his feet whyles he rubbed his eyen / the wulf was not well plesyd therwyth alle / And smote after hym er he escaped and caught hym in his armes and helde hym faste / notwythstandyng that he bledde / Reynard was woo thenne / There wrastled they longe and sore / The wulf wexe so angry that he forgat al his smarte and payne and threw the foxe al plat vnder hym / whiche cam hym euyl to passe / ffor his one hand by whiche he deffended hym sterte in the fallyng in to ysegryms throte / and thenne was he aferd to lese his hand /

The wulf sayd tho to the foxe / Now chese whether ye wyl yelde yow as ouercome / or ellis I shal certaynly slee yow / the skateryng of the dust / thy pysse / thy mockyng ne thy deffence / ne alle thy false wylys / may not now helpe the[e] / thou mayste not escape me / Thou hast here to fore don me so moche harme and shame / and now I haue lost myne one eye / and therto sore woundeed /

Whan reynard herde that it stode so rowme / that he shold chese to knowleche hym ouercomen and yelde hym / Or ellis to take the deth / he thought the choys was worth ten marke / And that he muste saye that one or that other / he had anon concluded what he wold saie / and began to saye to hym wyth fayr wordes in this wyse /

Dere eme I wyl gladly become your man wyth alle my good / And I wyl goo for you to the holy graue / and shal gete pardon and wynnyng for your cloistre / of alle the chyrches that ben in the holy lande / Whiche shal moche prouffyte to your sowle

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and your elders sowles also / I trowe ther was neuer suche a prouffre / prouffred to ony kynge / And I shal serue you / lyke as I shold serue our holy fader the pope / I shal holde of you al that I haue and euer ben your seruaunt and forth I shal make that al my lignage shal do in lyke wyse / Thenne shal ye be a lord a boue alle lordes / who shold thenne dare doo ony thyng ayenst you / And furthermore what someuer I take of polaylle / ghees / partrych or plouyer / fysshe or flesshe or what someuer it be / therof shal ye fyrst haue the choys / and your wyf and your chyldren / er ony come in my body / Therto I wyl alway abyde by you / that where ye be ther shal no hurte ne scathe come to yow / ye be strong and I am wyly / late vs abyde to gydre / that one wyth the counseyl and that other wyth the dede / then may ther nothyng mysfalle to vs ward / and we ben so nygh of kynne eche to other / that of right shold be no angre bytwene vs / I wold not haue foughten ayenst yow yf I myght haue escaped / But ye appeled me fyrst vnto fyghte / Tho muste I doo / that I not doo wold gladly / And in this bataylle I haue ben curtoys to yow / I haue not yet shewde the vtterist of my myght on yow / like as I wold haue doon yf ye had ben a straunger to me / ffor the neuew ought to spare the eme / it is good reson and it ought so to bee / Dere eme so haue I now doo / And that maye ye marke wel whan I ran to for yow. myn herte wold not consente therto. ffor I myght haue hurte yow moche more than I dyde. but I thought it neuer ffor I haue not hurte yow ne don yow so moche harm that may hyndre yow· sauf only that myshappe that is fallen on your eye / ach therfore I am sory and suffre moche sorow in my herte. I wold wel dere Eme that it had not happed yow. But that it had fallen on me. so that ye ther wyth had ben plesyd. how be it. that ye shal haue therby a grete auauntage. For whan ye here after slepe ye nede not to shette but one wyndowe. where another muste shette two. My wyf and my children. and my lignage shal falle dounn to your feet / to fore the kynge and to fore alle them that ye wyl desyre and praye yow humbly / that ye wyl suffre reynart your neuew lyue and also I shal knowleche ofte to haue trespaced ayenst yow / and what lesynges I haue lyed vpon yow / How myght ony lord haue more honour than I proffre yow / I wold for no good do this to another / therfore I praye yow to be plesyd here wyth al

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I Wote wel yf ye wolde ye myght now slee me / but and ye so don had / what had ye wonne / so muste ye euer after this tyme kepe yow fro my frendes and lignage / Therfore he is wyse that can in his angre / mesure hym self and not be ouer hasty / and to see wel what may falle or happe afterward to hym / what man that in his angre can wel aduyse hym certaynly he is wyse / Men fynde many fooles that in hete hasten hem so moche / that after they repente hem / and thenne it is to[o] late / but dere Eme I trowe that ye be to[o] wyse so to doo / hit is better to haue prys honour / reste / and pees / And many frendes that be redy to helpe hym / than to haue shame / hurte / vnreste / and also many enemyes lyeng in a wayte to doo / hym harme / Also it is lityl worship to hym that hath ouercomen aman / thenne to slee hym / it is grete shame / not for my lyf / Thaugh I were deed / that were a lytyll hurte.

ISegrym the wulf said / Ay / theef how fayn woldest thow he losed and dyscharged fro me / that here I wel by thy wordes / were thou now fro me on thy free feet / Thou woldest not sette by me an egge shelle / Though thou promysedest to me alle the world of fyn rede gold / I wold not late the[e] escape / I sette lytyl by the[e] and alle thy frendes and lignage / Alle that thou hast here said is but lesyngis and fayned falsenes / Wenest thou thus to deceyue me / it is longe syth that I knewe the[e] / I am no byrde to be locked ne take by chaf / I know wel ynowh good corn / O how woldest thou mocke me / yf I lete the[e] thus escape / thou myghtest wel haue said this to one that knewe the[e] not / but to me thou losest thy flateryng and swete floytyng / ffor I vnderstande to[o] wel thy subtyl lyeng talys / Thow haste so ofte deceyued me / that me behoueth now to take good hede of the[e]. Thou false stynkvng knaue thou saist that thou hast spared me in this batayl. loke hetherward to me / is not myn one eye out / and therto hast thou wounded me in xx places in my heed. thou woldest not suffre me so longe to reste. as to take ones my breeth. I were ouer moche a fool yf I shold now spare the[e]. or be mercyful to the[e]. so many a confusion and shame as thou hast don to me. and that also that toucheth me most of alle. that thou hast disworshipped me and sklaundred erswyn my wyf· Whom I loue as wel as my self. and falsely forsest and

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deceyuedest her. whiche shal neuer out of my herte. ffor as ofte as it cometh to myn mynde / alle myn angre and hate that I haue to the[e] reneweth.

In the mene w[h]ylle that ysegrym was thus spekyng. The foxe bithoughte hym how he myght helpe hym self. And stack his other hond after bytwene his legges. And grepe the wulf fast by the colyons. And he wronge hem so sore that for woo and payne / he muste crye lowde and howle / Thenne the foxe drewe his other hond out of his mouth / The wulf had so moche payne and anguyssh of the sore wryngyng that the foxe dowed and wronge his genytours / that he spytte blood / And for grete payne he byshote hym self

How ysegrym the wulf was ouercomen and how the batayl was taken vp and fynysshid / And how the foxe had the worship capitulo xlj°

THis payne dyde hym more sorow and woo / than his eye dyde that so sore bledde / and also it made hym to ouerthrowe alle in a swowne ffor he had so moche bledde / and also the threstyng that he suffred in his colyons made hym so faynt that he had lost his myght. Thenne reynard the foxe lepe vpon hym wyth al his myght / And caught hym by the legges and drewe hym forth thurgh the felde / that they alle myght see it / and he stack and smote hym sore / Thenne were ysegryms frends al ful of sorowe / and wente al wepyng vnto theyr lord the kynge / And prayde hym that he wold doo sece the batayll and take it vp in to his hande /

The kynge graunted it / and thenne wente the kepars / of the felde the lupaerd and the lossem and saide to the foxe and to the wulf / Our lord the kynge wil speke wyth yow / and wyl that this batayl be ended / he wil take it in to his hand / he desyreth that ye wyl gyue your stryf vnto hym ffor yf ony of yow here were slayn / it shold be grete shame on bothe sydes / For ye haue as moche worship of this felde as ye may haue /

and they sayde to the foxe / Alle the beestis gyue to yow the prys / that haue seen this bataylle /

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The foxe said therof I thanke hem / and what that shal plese my lord to commande that shal not I gaynsaye / I desire no better / but to haue wonne the felde / late my frendes come hether to me / I wil take aduyse of them what I shal doo /

They saide / that they thought it good / And also it was reson in weyghty maters a man shold take aduys of his frendes /

thenne cam dame slopecade / and grymbert the dasse her husbond / dame rukenawe wyth her ij susters / Byteluys and fulrompe her ij sones and hatenet her doughter / the flyndermows and the wezel / And ther cam moo than xx / whiche wolde not haue comen yf the foxe had loste the feeld· So who that wynneth and cometh to hys aboue. he geteth grete loos and worship / And who that is ouer throwen· And hath the werse. to hym wyl no man gladly come. Ther cam also to the foxe / the beuer. the otter and bothe theyr wyues panthecrote and ordegale. And the ostrole. the Martre the fychews. the fyret. the mowse. and the squyrel and many moo than I can name. And alle bycause he had wonne the feeld. ye[a] some cam that to fore had complayned on hym and were now of his next kynne. and they shewde hym right frendly chier and contenance. Thus fareth the world now. who that is riche and hye on the wheel. he hath many kynnesmen and frendes· that shal helpe to bere out his welthe. But who that is nedy and in payne or in pouerte. fyndeth but fewe frendes and kynnesmen· ffor euery man almost es[c]heweth his companye and waye.

There was thenne grete feste / they blewe vp trompettis and pyped wyth shalmoyses /

They sayden alle dere neuew blessyd be god that ye haue sped wel / we were in grete drede and fere whan we saw yow lye vnder /

reynart the foxe thanked alle them frendly / and resceyued them wyth grete Ioye and gladnes / Thenne he asked of them what they counseylled hym / yf he sholde gyue the felde vnto the kynge or noo /

Dame slopecade sayde / ye[a] hardely cosyn / Ye may wyth worship wel sette in it to his handes / And truste hym wel ynough /

Thoo wente they alle wyth the kepars of the feelde vnto the

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kynge / And Reynard the foxe wente to fore them alle / wyth trompes and pypes and moche other mynstralcye / The foxe kneled doun to fore the kynge /

The kynge bad hym stande vp / and said to hym / reynard ye be now Ioyeful / ye haue kepte your day worshipfully / I discharge yow. and late yow goo frely quyte where it plesyth yow / And the debate bytwene yow I holde it on me / And shal discusse it by reson and by counseyl of noble men and wil ordeyne therof that ought be doon by reson. at suche tyme as ysegrym shal be hool. And thenne I shal. sende for yow to come to me. And thenne by goddes grace I shal yeue out the sentence and Iugement·

An ensample that the fore told to the kynge whan he had wonne the felde. capitulo xliij°

MY worthy and dere lord the kynge. saide the foxe I am wel a greed and payd therwyth. But whan I cam fyrst in to your court. ther wer many that were felle and enuyous to me. Whiche neuer had hurte ne cause of scathe by me / but they thought that they myght beste ouer me / And alle they cryden wyth myn enemyes ayenst me / and wold fayn haue destroyed me / by cause they thought that the wulf was better withholden and gretter wyth you than I was whiche am your humble subget / They knewe none other thyng why ne wherfore / They thoughte not as the wyse be woned to doo / that is what the ende may happen /

My lorde thyse ben lyke a grete heep of hounndes whiche I ones sawe stonde at a lordes place vpon a donghil / where as they awayted that men sholde brynge them mete / Thenne saw they an hound come out of the kychen / and had taken there a fayr rybbe of beef er it was gyuen hym / And he ran fast away wyth all / but the cook had espyed or he wente away / and toke a grete bolle full of scaldyng water / and caste it on his hyppes behynde / Wherof he thankyd nothyng the cook / ffor the heer behynde was skalded of / And his skyn semed as it had be thurgh soden / Neuertheless he escaped away / and kepte that he had wonne /

And whan his felaws the other houndes saw hym come

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wyth this fayr rybbe / They called hym alle and saide to hym / O howe good a frende is the cook to the[e] / Whiche hath gyuen to the[e] so good a boone / Wheron his so moche flessh /

The hounde saide ye knowe nothyng therof / Ye preyse me lyke as ye see me to fore wyth the bone / But ye haue not seen me behynde / take hede and beholde me afterwarde on myn buttokkis. And thenne ye shal knowe how I haue deseruyd it.

And whan they had seen hym behynde on his hyppes how that his skynne and his flessh was al rawe and thurgh soden / tho growled them alle and were aferd of that syedyng water / and wold not of his felawship / but fledde and ran away from hym / and lete hym ther allone /

SEe my lord this right haue thyse false beestis / whan they be made lordes and may gete their desire / and whan they be myghty and doubted / thenne ben they extorcionners and scatte and pylle the peple/and eten them lyke as they were forhongred houndes / These ben they that bere the bone in her mouth / Noman dar haue to doo wyth hem / but preyse alle that they bedryue / Noman dar saye other wyse / but suche as shal plese hem by cause they wold not be shorn / and somme helpe them forth in theyr vnryghtwys dedes by cause they wold haue parte and lykke theyr fyngres / and strengthe them in theyr euyl lyf and werkis / O dere lorde how lytyl seen they that do thus after behynde them what the ende shal be atte laste they fal fro hye to lowe in grete shame and sorowe / and thenne theyr weerkis come to knowleche and be opene in suche wyse that noman hath pyte ne compasconn on them / in theyr meschief and trouble / and euery man curse them and saye euyl by them to their shame and vylanye / many of suche haue ben blamed and shorn ful nyghe that they had no worshipe ne prouffyt / but lose theyr heer as the hound dyde. that is theyr frendes. whiche haue holpe them to couere their mysdedes and extorconns. lyke as the heer coueryth the skynn / And wehan they haue sorow and shame for theyr olde trespaces. thenne eche body pluckyth his hand fro hym. And flee. lyke as the houndes dyde fro hym that was scalded wyth the syedyng water / and lete hym thyse extorcions in her sorow and nede /

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MY dere lorde kynge I beseche you to remembre this example of me / it shal not be ayenst your worship ne wysedom / What wene ye how many ben ther suche false extorcionners now in thise dayes / ye[a] moche werse than an hound / that bereth suche a bone in his mouth / in townes / in grete lordes courtes / whiche wyth grete facing and bracyng oppresse the poure peple wyth grete wronge / and selle theyr fredom and pryuelages / and bere them on hond of thyngis that they neuer knewe ne thoughte / And all for to gete good for theyr synguler proffyte / God gyue them all shame and soone destroye them who somme euer they be that so doo /

but god be thanked said the foxe / ther may noman endwyte me ne my lygnage ne kynne of suche werkys / but that we shal acquyte vs / And comen in the lyghte / I am not a ferd of ony / that can saye on me ony thyng that I haue don otherwyse than a trewe man ought to doo / Alleway the foxe / shall a byde the foxe though alle his enemyes hadde sworn the contrarye / My dere lorde the kynge I loue you wyth my herte aboue alle lordes / And neuer for noman wold I torne fro yow / But abyde by yow to the utterist how wel it hath ben otherwyse enformed your hyenes / I haue neuertheles alway do the best / and forth so wylle doo alle my lyf that I can or may /

How the kyng forgaf the fore alle thyngis / and made hym souerayn and grettest ouer al his landes. ca° xliij°

THe kynge sayde Reynard ye be one of them that oweth me homage· whiche I wyl that ye allway so doo. And also I wylle that erly and late ye be of my counseyl. and one of my Iustyses / See wel to[o] that ye not mysdoo / ne trespace nomore. I sette yow agayn in alle your myght and power. lyke as ye were to fore and see that ye further alle maters to the beste righte· For whan ye sette your wytte and counseyl to vertue and goodnesse· thenne may not our court be wythout your aduyse and counseyl. ffor here is non that is lyke to yow in sharp and hye counseyll ne subtyller in fyndyng a remedye for a

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meschief. And thynke ye on th[e]example that ye yourself haue tolde. And that ye haunte rightwysnes and be to me trewe. I will frohens forth werke and doo by your aduyse and counseyll. he lyueth not that yf he mysdede yow. But I shold sharply aduenge and wreke it on hym ye shalle oueralle speke and saye my wordes. And in alle my lande shall ye be aboue alle other souerayne and my bayle. That Offyce I gyue yow. ye may wel occupye it wyth worship/

Alle reynardis frendis and lignage thanketh the kynge heyly/

The kynge sayde/I wolde doo more ffor your sake/than ye wene/I pray yow alle that ye remembre hym that he be trewe/

Dame rukenawe thenne sayd yes sykerly my lord/that shal he euer be/And thynke ye not the contrary/for yf he were otherwyse/He were not of our kynne ne lignage And I wold euer myssake hym/and wold euer hyndre hym to my power/

Reynart the foxe thanked the kynge with fayr curtoys wordes/And sayd/dere lorde I am not worthy to haue the worship that ye doo to me/I shal thynke theron and be trewe to you also longe as I lyue/and shal gyue you as holsom holsom counseyl as shal be expedient to your good grace/

here wyth he departed wyth his frendes fro the kynge/

NOw herke how Isegrym the wulf dyde/bruyn the bere/thybert the catte/and erswynde and her chyldren wyth their lignage drewen the wulf out of the felde/and leyde hym vpon a lyter of heye/and couerd hym warm/and loked to his woundes whiche were wel. xxv· and ther came wyse maistres and surgyens. Whiche bonde them and weeshe hem he was so seke and feble/that he had lost his felynge/But they rubbed and wryued hym vnder his temples and eyen/that he sprange out of his swound/and cryde so lowde that alle they were aferde/they had wende that he had been wood

But the maistres gaf hym a drynke that comforted his herte and made hym to slepe They comforted his wyf/And tolde to her that ther was no deth wounde ne paryl of his lyf Thenne the court brake vp/and the beestis departed and wente to theyr places and homes that they came froo.

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How the fore wyth his frendis and lignage departed nobly fro the kynge / and wente to his castel malleperduys / capitulo xliij°

BEynart the foxe toke his leue honestly of the kynge and of the quene. And they bad hym he shold not tarye longe. But shortly retorne to them agayn· he answerd and said dere kynge and quene alway at your commandement I shal be redy / yf ye nede ony thyng whiche god forbede I wold alway be redy wyth my body and my good to helpe yow / and also al my frendes and lignage in lyke wyse shal obeye your commandement and desire / ye haue hyely deseruyd it / god quyte it yow and yeue yow grace longe to lyue / And I desyre your licence and leue to goo home to my wyf and chyldren / And yf your good grace wil ony thyng / late me haue knowleche of it And ye shal fynde me alway redy /

Thus departed the foxe wyth fayr wordes fro the kynge.

NOw who that coude sette hym in reynardis crafte / and coude behaue hym in flateryng and lyeng as he dyde / he shold I trowe be herde / bothe wyth the lordes spyrytuel and temporel / The[y] ben many and also the moste parte that crepe after his waye and his hole / The name that was gyuen to hym abydeth alway stylle wyth hym / he hathe lefte many of his crafte in this world / Whiche allewaye wexe and become myghty / for who that wyl not vse reynardis crafte now is nought worth in the world now in ony estate that is of myght. But yf he can crepe in reynardis nette / and hath ben his scoler / thenne may he dwelle with vs / For thenne knoweth he wel the way how he may aryse / And is sette vp aboue of euery man / Ther is in the world moche seed left of the foxe / whiche now oueral groweth and cometh sore vp / though they haue no rede berdes / Yet ther ben founden mo foxes now than euer were here to fore / The ryghtwys peple ben al loste / trouthe and rightwysnes ben exyled and fordriuen / And for them ben abyden wyth vs couetyse / falshede / hate and enuye / Thyse reyne now moche in euery contre / For is it in the popes court / the emperours / the kynges / dukes or ony

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other lordes where someuer it be eche man laboureth to put other out fro his worship / offyce and power / for to make hym sylf to clymme hye with lyes / with flateryng / wyth symonye / wyth money / or wyth strengthe and force / ther is none thyng byloued ne knowen in the court now adays but money / the money is better byloued than god / For men doo moche more therfore / ffor who someuer bryngeth money. shal be wel receyuyd and shal haue alle his desyre / is it of lordes or of ladyes or ony other / that money doth moche harme / Money bryngeth many in shame and drede of lyf / and bryngeth false wytnes ayenst true peple for to gete money. Hit causeth vnclennes of lyuyng· lyeng. and lecherye. Now clerkes goon to rome / to parys and to many another place. for to lerne reynardis crafte· is he clerke / is he laye man· euericne of them tredeth in the foxes path. and seketh his hole. The world is of suche condycion now. that euery man seketh hym self in alle maters. I wote not what ende shal come to vs herof Alle wyse men may sorowe wel herfore. I fere that for the grete falsenes thefte robberye and murdre that is now vsed so moche and comonly. and also the vnshamefast lecherye and auoultry bosted blowen a brood with the auauntyng of the same. that wythout grete repentaunce and penaunce therfore / that god will take vengeaunce and punysshe vs sore therfore / whom I humbly beseche and to whom nothyng is hyd that he wylle gyue vs grace to make amendes to hym therfore / and that we maye rewle vs to his playsyr /

And her wyth wil I leue ffor what haue I to wryte of thise mysdedis / I haue ynowh to doo with myn owne self / And so it were better that I helde my pees and suffre / And the beste that I can doo for to amende my self now in this tyme. And so I counseyle euery man to doo here in this present lyf / and that shal be most our prouffyt / For after this lyf / cometh no tyme that we may occupye to our auantage for to amende vs ffor thenne shal euery man answere for hym self and bere his own burthen /

REynardis frendes and lignage to the nombre of xl haue taken also theyr leue of the kynge / And wente alle to gydre wyth the foxe / whiche was right glad that he

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had so wel sped / And that he stode so wel in the kynges grace. he thought that he had no shame. but that he was so grete with the kyng that he myght helpe and further his frendes / and hyndre his enemyes / and also to doo what he wolde. wythout he sholdbe blamed yf he wold be wyse /

The ffoxe and his frendis wente so longe to gydre that they camen to his burgh to Maleperduys. ther they alle toke leue eche of other wyth fayr and courtoys wordes / Reynard dyde to them grete reuerence and thanked them alle frendly. of theyr good fayth and also worship that they had don and shewd to hym. And profred to eche of them his seruyse yf they had nede wyth body and goodes / And herwyth they departed and eche of them wente to theyr own howses /

The foxe wente to dame ermelyn his wyf whiche welcomed hym frendly he tolde to her and to his chyldren / alle the wonder / that to hym was befallen in the cóurt. And forgate not a worde / but tolde to them euery dele / how he had escaped / Thenne were they glad that theyr fader was so enhaunsed and grete wyth the kynge / And the foxe lyued forthon wyth his wyf and his chyldren in great Ioye and gladnes /

Now who that said to yow of the ffoxe more or lesse than ye haue herd or red / I holde it for lesynge / but this that ye haue herd or red / that may ye byleue wel / and who that byleueth it not / is not therfore out of the right byleue / how be it ther be many yf that they had seen it / they shold haue the lasse doubte of it / for ther ben many thynges in the world whiche ben byleuyd though they were neuer seen / Also ther ben many fygures / playes founden / that neuer were done ne happed / But for an example to the peple / that they may ther by the better / vse and folowe vertue / and t[o]eschewe synne and vyces / in lyke wyse may it be by this booke / that who that wyl rede this mater / though it be of iapes and bourdes / yet he may fynde therin many a good wysedom and lernynges / By whiche he may come to vertue and worship. Ther is no good man blamed herein / hit is spoken generally / Late euery man take his owne part as it belongeth and behoueth / and he that fyndeth hym gylty in ony dele or part therof / late hym bettre and amende hym And he that is veryly good / I pray god

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kepe hym therin And yf ony thyng be said or wreten herin / that may greue or dysplease ony man / blame not me / but the foxe / for they be his wordes and not myne /

Prayeng alle them that shal see this lytyl treatis / to correcte and amende / Where they shal fynde faute / For I haue not added ne mynusshed but haue folowed as nyghe as I can my copye whiche was in dutche / and by me william Caxton translated in to this rude and symple englyssh in th[e]abbey of westmestre. fynysshed the vj daye of Juyn the yere of our lord ·M.CCCC.Lxxxj. and the xxj yere of the regne of kynge Edward the iiijth /

Here endeth the historye of Reynard the fore etc.

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